

# CONVERSATIONS ON LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS FROM THE MAHĀBHĀRATA



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## INTRODUCTION

The Mahābhārata is known as the Fifth Veda and the storehouse of all Vedic knowledge. The Vedas themselves and their teachings are inaccessible to the vast majority of people because of the recondite language — being in ancient Sanskrit. The translations are inadequate because the original text is poetic and filled with mystical allusions. In order to really study the Vedas one needs to be initiated and study under a competent teacher full time for 12 years — an almost impossible feat for the vast majority of society and thus the Vedas have always been in the care of a tiny minority of Brahmins. For the common people all the teachings of the Vedas were presented in the epics and Puranas. The two epics Ramayana and Mahabharata are the commentaries on the Vedas, they were composed in easy Sanskrit and the lessons were delivered in the form of stories, discourses and in particular in the conversations (*samvādas*) we find scattered throughout the text. Both these epics were translated into common vernacular dialects and became the primary source of spiritual knowledge throughout South East Asia.

It is often remarked that Hindus are generally less informed about their religion because the Brahmins were the custodians of spiritual knowledge and kept it to themselves denying access to the other communities. This is simply not true. Every single teaching of the Vedas is available through the epics and Puranas and is presented to the general public through dance, drama, songs, discourses and plays

The Mahābhārata is a mine of spirituality in which are found countless gems. The *samvādas* or conversations are an important channel of teaching social values, ethics and morals. In Hinduism there is no dogma and the world and humanity are acknowledged to be extremely complex. Things are not black and white and there are two sides to every topic. Debate using reason and logic has been a central feature of Hindu philosophical discourse from time immemorial. And so in the *samvādas* we have arguments for a proposal and arguments against. It is ultimately up to the reader to reflect upon these arguments and to form his/her own opinion.

Presenting the teachings in the form of stories, discussions and narratives also leaves a lasting impression on the mind of the reader because the teaching is given in a setting with characters with whom one can identify. The topics range from the sublime to the common and are all relevant guidance as to how we can achieve happiness and wellbeing here and now.

Translating from one language into another, especially an ancient language like Sanskrit is fraught with difficulty. As there are very few words that can be translated directly into English. Idiomatic expressions are not easily translatable. So a translator has the task of attempting to convey the original meaning in a form of modern English which is easily comprehensible.

I have kept the original text for the interest of those who wish to read it in the original or for those who wish to cross reference certain words and get a better understanding of the nuances in the language. How well I have succeeded is left to the scholars to decide.

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# DRAUPADI'S DISCOURSE ON FORGIVENESS

Mahabharata - Vana Parva Adhyaya 27/28

Vaiśampāyana uvāca

tato vanagatāḥ pārthāḥ sâyāhne saha kṛṣṇayā |  
upaviṣṭāḥ kathāścakrur duḥkha śoka parāyaṇāḥ || 1 ||  
priyā ca darśanīyā ca paṇḍitā ca pativrata |  
atha kṛṣṇa dharmarājam idaṁ vacanam abravīt || 2 ||

Vaishampayana said:— "Exiled to the forest, the Pāṇḍavas with Draupadi seated in the evening, afflicted by sorrow and grief conversed with one another. And the beautiful and well informed Draupadi, dear to her husbands and devoted to them, spoke to Yudhishthira."

Draupadi uvāca

na nūnaṁ tasya pāpasya duḥkham asmāsu kiñcana |  
vidyate dhārtarāṣṭrasya nṛsaṁsasya durātmanaḥ || 3 ||  
yas tvāṁ rājan mayā sārdham ajinaīḥ prativāsitaṁ |  
vanaṁ prasthāpya duṣṭātmā nānvatapyata durmatīḥ || 4 ||

Draupadi said:— "Duryodhana the sinful, cruel and malicious son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra - certainly feels no pity for us, when, O king, that evil-hearted wretch having exiled us all to the woods dressed in deer-skin feels absolutely no remorse!

āyasaṁ hr̥dayaṁ nūnaṁ tasya duṣkṛta karmaṇaḥ |  
yas tvāṁ dharmaparaṁ śreṣṭhaṁ rūkṣāṇyaśrāvayattadā |  
vacanāny-āparokṣāṇi durvācyāni ca saṁsadi || 5 ||  
sukhocitaṁ aduḥkhārhaṁ durātmā sasuhṛdgaṇaḥ |  
īdṛṣaṁ duḥkhamānīya modate pāpa-pūruṣaḥ || 6 ||

The heart of that evil scoundrel must surely be made of iron when he could at that time<sup>1</sup> address you, his virtuous eldest brother<sup>2</sup>, in words so harsh! Having brought you, who deserve to enjoy every happiness and pleasure, into such distress, alas, that wicked-minded and sinful scumbag rejoices with his friends!

catur nāmeva pāpānām asraṁ na patitaṁ tadā |  
tvayi bhārata niṣkrānte vanāyājina-vāsasi || 7 ||  
duryodhanasya kaṇṇasya śakuneśca durātmanaḥ |  
durbhrātus tasya cograsya rājan duḥkha śāsanasya ca || 8 ||  
itareśāṁ tu sarveśāṁ kurūṇāṁ kurusattama |  
duḥkhenābhiparītānāṁ netrebhyaḥ prāpataj-jalam || 9 ||

O Yudhishthira, when you were dressed in deer-skin garments (like a forest hermit) and were setting out for exile in the forest, only four people, did not shed a tear; viz Duryodhana, Karna, the evil-minded Sakuni, and Dussasana that nasty and vicious brother of Duryodhana! With the exception of these, all the other Kurus overcome with sorrow shed tears a plenty!

yā tvā'haṁ kauśikair vastraiḥ śubhraiḥ āccāḍitaṁ purā |  
dr̥ṣṭavatya asmi rājenadra sādya paśyāmi chīriṇam || 10 ||

<sup>1</sup> In the meeting hall after Yudhishthira had lost the gambling tournament.

<sup>2</sup> They were actually cousins but in Indian cultural parlance cousins are also called siblings.



I remember you before, O king, dressed in silken clothes of pure white! But I now see you dressed in rags!

bhīmasenaṁ hi karmāṇi svayaṁ kurvāṇam acyutam |  
sukhārhaṁ duḥkhitam dṛṣtvā kasmād rājann upekṣase || 11 ||

Why are you so completely indifferent, when you see the illustrious Bhimasena who was completely independent in all things, so fallen into distress, although he deserves every happiness?

tam imaṁ puruṣa vyāghraṁ pūjitaṁ deva dānavaiḥ |  
dhyāyantaṁ arjunaṁ dṛṣtvā kasmād rājan na kupyasi || 12 ||

Witnessing Arjuna, that tiger among men once worshipped by both the celestials and the Danavas now deeply pensive, why, O king, do you not feel any anger?

darśanīyaṁ ca sūraṁ ca mādri-putraṁ yudhiṣṭhira |  
sahadevaṁ vane dṛṣtvā kasmāt kṣamasi pārthiva ||  
nakulaṁ sahadevaṁ ca dṛṣtvā te duḥkhitāṁ-ubhau |  
aduḥkhārhaṁ manuṣyendra kasmān manyur na vardhate || 13 ||

O Yudhishtira, at the sight of Madri's son, the handsome and brave Sahadeva in exile? Why do you still forgive [your enemies]? At the sight of both Nakula and Sahadeva overwhelmed with grief, though so undeserving of such distress why does your anger not boil over?

drupadasya kule jātāṁ snuśāṁ pāṇḍor mahātmanaḥ |  
dhr̥ṣṭadyumnasya bhaginīm vīrapatnīm anuvratām |  
mām vai vanagatām dṛṣtvā kasmāt kṣamasi pārthiva || 14 ||

Why also, do you pardon the enemy at the sight of myself in exile? I who am born in the race of Drupada and am the sister of Dhrishtadyumna, the daughter-in-law of the illustrious Pandu and the devoted wife of five heroes?

nūnaṁ ca tava naivāsti manyur bharatasattama |  
yatte bhrātṛṁśca mām caiva dṛṣtvā navyathate manaḥ || 15 ||

Truly, though you're the best of the Bharata tribe, you must have no anger, why else is it that you're not moved at sight of your brothers and myself (in such distress)?

yo na darśayate tejaḥ kṣatriyaḥ kāla āgate |  
sarva bhūtāni taṁ pārtha sadā paribhavanty uta || 16 ||

That warrior, who is incapable of activating his military expertise when the apt opportunity arises, is forever condemned by everyone!

tattvayā na kṣamā kāryā śatrūṇ prati kathaṇcana |  
tejasaiva hi te śakyā nihantuṁ nātra saṁśayaḥ || 17 ||

Therefore, O king, you should indeed not extend your forgiveness to the enemy. With your prowess, without a doubt, you're capable of slaying them all!

tathaiva yaḥ kṣamākāle kṣatriyo nopaśāmyati |  
apriyaḥ sarvabhūtānām somutreha ca naśyati || 18 ||

Likewise that warrior who is not appeased when the time for forgiveness comes, becomes unpopular with every creature and meets with destruction both in this and the other world!

atrāpy udāharantīm amit ihāsaṁ purātanam |  
prahlādasya ca saṁvādaṁ baler vairocanasya ca || 19 ||

On this subject, the ancient story of the conversation between Prahlada and Vali, the son of Virochana, is worth quoting as a precedent.

asurendraṁ mahā-prājñaṁ dharmāṇām āgatāgamam |  
baliḥ papraccha daityenadraṁ prahlādaṁ pitarāṁ pituḥ || 20 ||

One day Vali asked his grand-father Prahlada, the chief of the Asuras and the Danavas, who was very wise and well-versed in the mysteries of the Dharma, saying;

kṣamā svicchreyasī tāta utāho teja ityuta |  
etan me saṁśayaṁ tāta yathāvad brūhi prcchate || 21 ||

"O sire, which in your opinion is superior, is it forgiveness or the use of force? This quandary is puzzling me, please be kind and solve my doubt!"

tasmai provāca tat sarvam evaṁ prṣṭaḥ pitāmahaḥ |  
sarva niścayavit prājñaḥ saṁśayaṁ pariprcchate || 22 ||

Thus asked (by Vali), his wise grandfather Prahlad, conversant with every conclusion, responded and clarified the whole subject to his grandson who wanted a resolution of his doubts.

prahlāda uvāca

na śreyaḥ satataṁ tejo na nityaṁ śreyasī kṣamā |  
iti tāta vijānīhi dvayam etad asaṁśayaṁ || 23 ||

And Prahlada said:— "Grandson! You need to know that might is not always meritorious and neither is forgiveness always praiseworthy!

yo nityaṁ kṣamate tāta bahūn doṣāṁ sa vindati |  
bhṛtyāḥ paribhavanty-enam udāsīnās tathā'rayaḥ || 24 ||

One who always forgives suffers from many shortcomings. Employees, strangers and enemies always disrespect him.

sarva bhūtāni cāpyas na namante kadācana |  
tasmān nityaṁ kṣamā tāta paṇḍitair api varjitā || 25 ||

No creature ever pays any regard to him. Therefore the learned reject a constant habit of forgiveness!

avajñāya hitaṁ bhṛtyā bhajante bahu doṣatām |  
ādātuṁ cāsya vittāni prārthayante'lpā cetasaḥ || 26 ||

The employees of an ever-forgiving person pay him little heed, and contract numerous faults. These mean-minded men will also seek to exploit him and deprive him of wealth.

yānaṁ vastrāṇy alaṅkāraṇī śayanāny-āsanāni ca |  
bhojanān yatha pānāni sarvopakaraṇāni ca || 27 ||

Unscrupulous employees will also appropriate to themselves his vehicles, clothes and ornaments, beds and seats, food and drink and other articles of use.

ādadīran nadhikṛtā yathā kāmam acetasaḥ |  
pradiṣṭāni ca deyaṇi na dadyur bhartṛ-śāsanāt || 28 ||  
na cainaṁ bhartṛ pūjābhiḥ pūjayanti kadācana |  
avrajñānaṁ hi loke'smin maraṇād api garhitam || 29 ||

They disobey the commands of their employer, they don't render to others the services they are supposed to give, nor do they even honour their boss with that respect which is his due. Disregard in this world is worse than death.

tathā ca nitya muditā yadi nālpamapīśvarāt |  
akṛtopadravaḥ kaścīn mahānapi na pūjyate |  
pūjayanti narā nāgānna tārksyaṁ nāma ghātinam || 30 ||

And employees that are always fond of pleasure, if they don't receive even slight punishments from their employer, develop all sorts of vices, and the wicked will even seek to injure such an employer.

ete cānye ca bahavo nityaṁ doṣāḥ kṣamāvatām |  
atha vairocane doṣān imān viddhy akṣamāvatām || 31 ||

These and many other demerits attach to those that are always forgiving! Listen now, O son of Virochana, to the demerits of those that are never forgiving!

asthāne yadi vā sthāne satataṁ rajasāvṛtaḥ |  
kruddho daṇḍān praṇayati vividhān svena tejasā || 32 ||  
mitraiḥ saha virodhaṁ ca prāpnute tejasā"vṛtaḥ |  
āpnoti dveṣyatāṁ caiva lokāt svajanatas tathā || 33 ||

The irascible person who, enveloped in darkness, always energetically inflicts various kinds of punishment on others whether they deserve them or not, is necessarily alienated from his friends by that negative energy of his. Such a man is hated by both his relatives and by strangers.

so'vamānād artha hānim upālabhaman ādaram |  
saṁtāpa dveṣa mohānśca śatrūnśca labhate naraḥ || 34 ||

Such a person, because he insults others, suffers loss of wealth and invites disrespect, sorrow, hatred and confusion and makes many enemies.

krodhād daṇḍān manuṣyeṣu vividhān puruṣo'nayāt |  
bhraśyate śīghram aiśvaryāt prāṇebhyaḥ svajanād api || 35 ||

The angry person, due to his severity, inflicts random punishments on others. He is quickly divested of his prosperity and even of his life, not to say, separation from friends and relatives.

yopakartṛśca hartrṛśca tejasaivopagacchati |  
tasmād udvijate lokaḥ sarpād veśma gatād iva || 36 ||

He exercises his power both upon his benefactors and his opposition, he creates social upheaval, like a snake that takes up residence in a house.

yasmād udvijate lokaḥ katham tasya bhavo bhavet |  
antaram tasya dṛṣṭvaiva loko vikurute dhruvam || 37 ||

What prosperity can one have, who is an object of alarm to the world? People will always do him an injury when they find an opportunity.

tasmān nāty-utsṛjet tejo na ca nityaṁ mṛdur bhavet |  
kāle kāle tu saṁprāpte mṛdus-tīkṣṇopi vā bhavet || 38 ||

Therefore, one should never exhibit power in excess nor forgiveness on all occasions. One should apply severity or leniency at the appropriate time.

kāle mṛdur yo bhavati kāle bhavati dāruṇaḥ |  
sa vai sukham avāpnoti loka'muśminn ihaiva ca || 39 ||

He that is lenient at the proper time and severe also when appropriate, obtains happiness both in this world and the other.

kṣamā kālānstu vakṣyāmi śṛṇu me vistareṇa tām |  
ye te nityam asaṁtyājyā yathā prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ || 40 ||

I shall now elaborate on the occasions on which forgiveness is appropriate, as laid down by the learned, and which should always be observed by all.

pūrvopakārī yaste syād aparādhe garīyasi |  
upakāreṇa tat tasya kṣantavyam aparādhinaḥ || 41 ||

If someone has done you a favour, even if he is guilty of a grave offence, recollecting his former service, you should always forgive that offender.

abuddhim āśritānām tu kṣantavyam aparādhinām |  
na hi sarvatra pāṇḍitvaṁ sulabhaṁ puruṣeṇa vai || 42 ||

Those also that have offended one from ignorance should be forgiven, because learning and wisdom are not always easily attainable.

atha ced buddhijam kṛtvā brūyus te tad abuddhijam |  
pāpān svalpe'pi tām hanyādaparādhe tathā'nṛjūn || 43 ||

Those who, having offended you knowingly, plead ignorance should still be punished, even if their offences are trivial. Such crooked people should never be pardoned.

sarvasyaikoparādhaste kṣantavyaḥ prāṇino bhavet |  
dvitīye sati vadhyastu svalpe'pyapakṛte bhavet || 44 ||

The first offence of every creature should be forgiven. The second offence, however, should be punished, even if it is trivial.

ajānatā bhavet kaścīd aparādhaḥ kṛto yadi |  
kṣantavyam eva tasyāhuḥ aparīkṣya parīkṣayā || 45 ||

If, however, a person commits an offence without intent, it has been said that examining the plea well by a judicious enquiry, one should be pardoned.

mṛdunā dāruṇaṁ hanti mṛdunā hanti adāruṇam |  
nāsādhyam mṛdunā kiñcit tasmāt tivrataṁ mṛdu || 46 ||

Leniency may counteract severity, leniency may vanquish weakness. There is nothing that leniency may not accomplish. Therefore, leniency is truly more powerful [than it seems]!

deśakālau tu saṁprekṣya balābalaṁ athātmanaḥ |  
anvīkṣya kāraṇaṁ caiva kāryaṁ tejaḥ kṣamāpi vā || 47 ||

One should always act according to place and time, taking into account one's own strengths and weaknesses. Nothing can succeed that has been undertaken without reference to place and time.

nādeśakāle kiñcit syād deśakālau pratīkṣatām |  
tathā lokabhayāc caiva kṣantavyam aparādhitam || 48 ||

Therefore, always consider well the place and the time! Sometimes offenders should be forgiven because of public opinion.



eta evaṁ vidhāḥ kālāḥ kṣamāyāḥ parikīrtitāḥ |  
ato'nyathā'nuvartatsu tejasah kāla ucyate || 49 ||

These have been declared to be times of forgiveness. And it has been said that on occasions besides these, severity should be employed against transgressors.

tad ahaṁ tejasah kālaṁ tava manye narādhipa |  
dhārtarāṣṭreṣu lubdheṣu satataṁ cāpakāriṣu || 50 ||

Draupadi continued:– "In my opinion O king, that the time has come for you to demonstrate your might against those Kurus, the greedy sons of Dhritarashtra who have always worked against us.

na hi kaścit kṣamākālo vidyate'dya kurūn prati |  
tejasā cāgate kāle teja utsraṣṭum arhasi || 51 ||  
mṛdur bhavaty avajñātas tīkṣṇād udvijate janaḥ |  
kāle prāpte dvayaṁ caitadyo veda sa mahīpatiḥ || 52 ||

The present is not the time for the forgiveness of the Kurus! Now is the time for harshness and display of might. The humble and forgiving person is disregarded; while those that are severe persecute others. He, indeed, is a king who has recourse to both techniques, each according to its time!"



# THE GLORY OF WOMEN

Mahabharata - anuśāsana parva

bhīṣma uvāca

arhaṇaṁ tat kumārīṇāṁ āṇṣāṁsyāṁ vrataṁ ca tat |  
sarvaṁ ca prati-deyaṁ syāt kanyāyai tad aśeṣataḥ || 1 ||

Bhishma said:— "Respect, kindness, and everything else that is agreeable, should all be given unreservedly to the maiden whose hand is taken in marriage.

pitṛbhir bhrātr̥bhiścāpi śvaśurair atha devaraiḥ |  
pūjyā lālayitavyāśca bahu kalyāṇam īpsubhiḥ || 2 ||

Her father and brothers and father-in-law and husband's brothers should show her every respect and adorn her with ornaments, if they wish to reap any benefit, for such conduct on their part always leads to considerable happiness and advantage.

yadi vai strī na roceta pumāṁsaṁ na pramodayet |  
apramodāt punaḥ puṁsaḥ prajano na pravardhate || 3 ||

If the wife does not like her husband or fails to gladden him, from such aversion and absence of joy, the husband can never have offspring for increasing his race.

pūjyā lālayitavyāśca striyo nityaṁ janādhipa |  
striyo yatra ca pūjyante ramante tatra devatāḥ || 4 ||

Women, O king, should always be worshipped and treated with affection. Wherever women are treated with respect, the very deities are said to rejoice.

apūjitaśca yatraitāḥ sarvās tatrā phalāḥ kriyāḥ |  
tadā caitat kulaṁ nāsti yadā śocanti jāmayaḥ || 5 ||

Wherever women are not worshipped, all acts become fruitless. If the women of a family, in consequence of the treatment they receive, grieve and shed tears, that family soon becomes extinct.

jāmīśaptāni gehāni nikṛttānīva kṛtyayā |  
naiva bhānti na vardhante śriyā hīnāni pārthiva || 6 ||

Those houses that are cursed by women meet with destruction and ruin as if scorched by some Atharvan rite. Such houses lose their splendour. Their growth and prosperity cease O king.

pitṛbhir bhrātr̥bhiś ca-etāḥ patibhir devarais tathā |  
pūjyā bhūṣayitavyāś ca bahukalyāṇam īpsubhiḥ ||

Women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands, and brothers-in-law, who desire (their own) welfare. (Manu 3:55)

yatra nāryas tu pūjyante ramante tatra devatāḥ |  
yatra-etās tu na pūjyante sarvās tatra-aphalāḥ kriyāḥ ||

Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite yields rewards. (Manu 3:56)

śocanti jāmaya yatra vinaśyaty āśu tat kulam |  
na śocanti tu yatra-etā vardhate tadd hi sarvadā ||

Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers. (Manu 3:57)

striyaḥ puṁsāṁ paridadau manur jigamiṣur-divam |  
abalāḥ svalpa kaupīnāḥ suhr̥da satya jiṣṇavaḥ || 7 ||

Manu, on the eve of his departure for Heaven, made over women to the care and protection of men, saying that they are vulnerable, that they fall an easy prey to the seductive wiles of men<sup>3</sup>, disposed to accept the love that is offered them, and devoted to truth.

īrṣavo māna kāmāśca caṇḍāśca suhr̥do'budhāḥ |  
striyastu mānam arhanti tā mānayata mānavāḥ || 8 ||

There are some among them that are malicious, status-conscious, harsh, unlovable, and impervious to reason. Women, however still deserve to be honoured, so O men! Always show them respect.

strī-pratyayo hi vai dharmo rati-bhogāśca kevalāḥ |  
paricaryā namaskārās tadāyattā bhavantu vaḥ || 9 ||

The Dharma of men depends upon [how they treat] women<sup>4</sup>. All pleasures and enjoyments also completely depend upon them. So serve them and worship them, bend your wills before them.

utpādanam apatyasya jātasya paripālanam |  
prītyartham loka yātrāyāḥ paśyata strī nibandhanam || 10 ||

The begetting of offspring, the raising of children already born, and the accomplishment of all acts necessary for the benefit of society, all these are dependent upon women.

sammānya mānāścaitā hi sarva kāryāṣy avāpsyatha |  
videha rāja duhitā cātra ślokaṁ agāyata || 11 ||

By respecting women, you are sure to attain success in all your projects. In this connection a princess of the house of Janaka the ruler of the Videhas, composed a verse.

nāsti yajñāḥ striyāḥ kaścinna śrāddham nopravāsakam |  
dharmāḥ svabhartr̥ śuśrūṣā tayā svargaṁ jayantyuta || 12 ||

It is this:— "Women have no yajña ordained for them. There are no śraddhās which they are called upon to perform. They are not required to observe any fasts. To perform their duty towards their husbands and in-laws is their only obligation. Through the discharge of that duty they succeed in conquering heaven.

pitā rakṣati kaumāre bhartā rakṣati yauvane |  
putrāśca sthāvire bhāve na strī svātantryam arhati || 13 ||

In childhood, the father protects her. The husband protects her in youth. When she becomes old, her sons, protect her. At no period of her life should a woman be left alone.<sup>5</sup>

śrīya etāḥ striyo nāma satkāryā bhūtim icchatā |  
lālītā'nugrhitā ca śrīḥ strī bhavati bhārataḥ || 14 ||

Women are goddesses of prosperity. The person that desires affluence should honour them. By cherishing women, O Bharata, one cherishes the goddess of prosperity herself.

<sup>3</sup> *Svalpa-kaupinah* literally is covered with a small piece of cloth, hence, capable of being easily seduced.

<sup>4</sup> Societies are judged by the way they treat their women. Empowering women is the key to a community's prosperity.

<sup>5</sup> This verse or similar ones have often been construed as endorsing the subjugation of women, but the gist is that women are vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous men and hence should always be protected and not left to fend for themselves.

# CONVERSATION OF MR̥TYU GĀUTĀMĪ Et Al.

anuśāsana parva 1



yudhiṣṭhira uvāca  
śamo bahu vidhākāraḥ sūkṣma uktaḥ pitāmaha |  
na ca me hṛdaye śāntir asti kṛtvedam īdṛśam || 1 ||

Yudhishtira said:— ‘O grandsire, mental tranquillity has been said to be subtle and of diverse forms. I have heard all your discourses, but still I’ve personally not achieved peace of mind.

asminn arthe bahu vidhā śāntir uktā tvayānagha |  
svakṛte kā nu śāntiḥ syācchamād bahu vidhādapi || 2 ||

In this matter, various means of quieting the mind have been taught by you — when I myself have been the instrument of bringing about all this tragedy [of war] how can I achieve peace?

śarācita-śarīraṁ hi tivravraṇam udīkṣya ca |  
śamaṁ nopalabhe vīra duṣkṛtānyeva cintayan || 3 ||

Seeing your body covered with arrows and festering with nasty wounds, I fail to find any peace of mind at the thought of all the evils I have wrought.

rudhireṇāvasiktāṅgaṁ prasravantaṁ yathācalam |  
tvāṁ dṛṣtvā puruṣa vyāghra sīde varṣāsvivāmbujam || 4 ||

Seeing your body bathed in blood, like a hill overrun with springs of water [in the rainy season], I am languishing with grief even as the lotus in the rainy season<sup>6</sup>.

anyasmin api loke vai yathā mucyema kilbiṣāt |  
tathā praśādhi mām rājan mama ced icchasi priyam || 5 ||

If you have any affection for me, give me some instruction on how I can free myself from the effects of my evil actions in this world itself.

bhīṣma uvāca

paratantraṁ kathaṁ hetum ātmānam anupaśyasi |  
karmaṇy-asmin mahābhāga sūkṣmaṁ hyetad atīndriyam || 6 ||

Bhishma replied:— "Why do you consider your self, which is dependent (on Ívara and Karma and Time) to be the cause of your actions? The workings of Karma are subtle and imperceptible to the senses.

atrāpy-udāharantīmam itihāsaṁ purātanam |  
saṁvādaṁ mr̥tyu gautamyoḥ kāla lubdhaka pannagaiḥ || 7 ||

In this connection the scholars narrate the ancient story of the conversation between Mr̥tyu, Gautami, Kāla, the hunter and the snake.

<sup>6</sup> The lotus requires full sun, during the monsoon the clouds obscure the sun and cause great stress to the flowers even though they are aquatic plants and enjoy the water.

gautamī nāma kaunteya sthvirā śamasamṛyutā |  
sarpeṇa daṣṭam svaṁ putram apaśyad gata cetanam || 8 ||

There was an old lady by the name of Gautamī<sup>7</sup>, who was possessed of great patience and mental tranquillity. One day she found her son lying dead after having been bitten by a snake and she was extremely distraught.

atha tam snāyupāśena baddhvā sarpam amarṣitaḥ |  
lubdhako'rjunako nāma gautamyāḥ samupānayat || 9 ||

A passionate hunter, by the name of Arjunaka, had caught and bound the snake with a noose and brought it before Gautami.

tām cābravīd ayam te sa putrahā pannagādhamah |  
brūhi kṣipraṁ mahā-bhāge vadhyatām kena hetunā || 10 ||

He said to her, O blessed lady this is the wretched snake that caused your son's death. Tell me quickly how this low life should be destroyed.

agnau prakṣipyatāmeṣa chidyatām khaṇḍaśopi vā |  
na hyayam bālahā pāpaś-ciraṁ jīvitum arhati || 11 ||

Shall I throw it into a fire or shall I hack it into pieces? This wicked child-killer does not deserve to live a moment longer.

gautamyuvāca

visrjainam abuddhis tvaṁ na vadhyo'rjunaka tvayā |  
ko hyātmānam guruṁ kuryāt prāptavye sati cintayan || 12 ||

Gautami replied:— O silly Arjunaka! Please release this snake. It does not deserve to be killed. Who can avoid that which is inevitable and who would burden himself with such folly, as committing sin [by killing this creature]?

plavante dharma laghavo loke'mbhasi yathā plavāḥ |  
majjanti pāpa guravaḥ śastraṁ skannam ivodake || 13 ||

Those that have made themselves light by the practice of virtuous deeds, manage to cross the sea of samsāra even as a ship crosses the ocean. But those that have made themselves heavy with sin sink to the bottom, even as axe thrown into the water.

hatvā cainam nāmṛtaḥ syād ayam me jīvatyasmin ko'tyayas syād ayam te |  
asyotsarge prāṇa-yuktasya jantor mṛtyor lokaṁ ko nu gacched anantam || 14 ||

By killing the snake, my boy will not be restored to life, and by letting it live, no harm will be caused to you. Who would want to go to the eternal regions of Yama by wilfully slaying this living creature?

lubdhaka uvāca

jānāmyaham devī guṇāguṇajñāḥ sarve niyuktā guravo vai bhavanti |  
svasthasyaite tūpadeśā bhavanti tasmāt kṣudraṁ sarpam enaṁ haniṣye || 15 ||

“The hunter said:- O lady that knows the difference between right and wrong, I know that the great are afflicted at seeing the suffering of any creature. But this teaching is for healthy and happy people<sup>8</sup> — I will therefore kill this snake!

<sup>7</sup> The Buddhist canon also has a parable about a lady named Kissa Gautami who lost her only child as well. She went in grief to the Buddha requesting him to revive her child. He agreed on condition that she brought him a mustard seed from a house in which no one had ever died.

<sup>8</sup> People who are themselves suffering don't really care about the suffering of others.



śamārthinaḥ kāla-gatiṁ sadyaḥ śucaṁ tvaṛtha vidastyajanti |  
śreyaḥ kṣayaṁ śocati nityamohāt tasmācchucaṁ muñca hate bhujaṅge || 16 ||

Those who value peace of mind attribute everything to Time as the cause, but practical people soon assuage their grief [by revenge]. People through delusion, fear loss of beatitude [in the next world for acts like these] and continue grieving. Therefore, O lady, assuage your grief by allowing me to destroy this snake.

gautamyuvāca

ārta naivam vidyate'smad vidhānāṁ dharmārāmaḥ satataṁ sajjano hi |  
nityāyasto bālajano na cāsti dharmo hyeṣa prabhavāmyasya nāham || 17 ||

Gautami replied:— Arjunaka! People like us are never afflicted by any misfortune. Good and virtuous people are always intent on Dharma. The death of my son was predestined: therefore, I am unable to approve of the death of this snake.

na brāhmaṇānāṁ kopo'sti kutaḥ kopācca yātanā |  
mārdavāt kṣamyatāṁ sādho mucyatām eṣa pannagaḥ || 18 ||

Brahmaṇas never harbour resentment, because resentment leads to suffering. My good man, show compassion, forgive and release this snake.

lubdhaka uvāca

hatvā lābhaḥ śreya evāvyayaṁ syāt sadyo lābho balavadbhiḥ praśastaḥ |  
kālālābho yastu satyo bhaveta śreyo lābhaḥ kutsite'sminn te syāt || 19 ||

The hunter replied:— ‘By killing this snake we will benefit many. Let us earn great and inexhaustible merit. The powerful use their strength to obtain immediate benefit. Benefit that is obtained in the course of time is the best. I see not benefit in letting this snake live.

gautamyuvāca

kā nu prāptir grhya śatruṁ nihatya kā vā śāntiḥ prāpya śatruṁ na muktvā |  
kasmāt saumya bhujage na kṣameyaṁ; mokṣaṁ vā kiṁ kāraṇaṁ nāsyā kuryām ||

Gautami replied:— ‘What good is there in tormenting and killing an enemy, and what benefit is gained by not releasing a captive enemy? Therefore, gentle one, why should we not forgive this snake and try to earn merit by releasing it?’

lubdhaka uvāca

asmād ekasmād bahavo rakṣitavyā naiko bahubhyo gautami rakṣitavyaḥ |  
kṛtāgasāṁ dharmā vidadas tyajanti sarīṣṛpaṁ pāpamimaṁ jahi tvam || 21 ||

The hunter replied:— Gautami! A great number [of people] ought to be protected from this single venomous snake, instead of this one creature being protected [in preference to many]. It is never right to protect one to the detriment of many. Virtuous people abandon the vicious (to their doom): therefore, let this wicked creature be killed.

gautamyuvāca

nāsmiṁ hate pannage putrako me samprāpsyate lubdhaka jīvitam vai |  
guṇaṁ cānyaṁ nāsyā vadhe prapaśye tasmāt sarpaṁ lubdhaka muñca jīvam || 22 ||

Gautami replied:— O hunter, by killing this snake, my son will not be restored to life, nor do I see that any other benefit will be attained by its death: therefore, I request you – release this creature alive.

lubdhaka uvāca

vṛtraṁ hatvā devarāt śreṣṭha bhāg vai yajñaṁ hatvā bhāgam avāpa caiva |

śūlī devo devavṛttaṁ cara tvaṁ kṣipraṁ sarpaṁ jahi mā bhūd te viśaṅkā || 23 ||

“The hunter said:– O holy lady, By killing Vritra, Indra secured the highest state, and by destroying the sacrifice of Daksha, Mahadeva with his trident secured his share of sacrificial offerings – therefore, [using the example set by the gods] destroy this snake immediately without any misgivings!’

bhīṣma uvāca

asakṛt procyamānāpi gautamī bhujagaṁ prati |  
lubdhakena mahā bhāgā pāpe naivākaron matim || 24 ||

Bhishma continued:– The saintly Gautami, although repeatedly incited by the hunter to have the snake destroyed, did not incline her mind to that harmful act.

īṣaducchvasamānastu kṛcchrāt saṁstabhya pannagaḥ |  
utsasarja giraṁ mandāṁ mānuṣīm pāśapīḍitaḥ || 25 ||

The snake, painfully bound with the cord, sighing a little and retaining its composure with great difficulty, then uttered these words slowly, in a human voice.

sarpa uvāca

konvarjunaka doṣo'tra vidyate mama bālīśa |  
asvatantraṁ hi mām mṛtyur vivaśaṁ yadacūcudat || 26 ||  
tasyāyaṁ vacanād daṣṭo na kopena na kāmyayā |  
tasya tat kilbiṣaṁ lubdha vidyate yadi kilbiṣam || 27 ||

The snake said:– Arjunaka you're so naive, what fault is there of mine? I have no will of my own, and I am not independent. Mṛtyu (Death) sent me on this errand. By his directive I bit this child, and not out of any anger or choice on my part. Therefore if there be any sin in this, the sin is his.

lubdhaka uvāca

yady anya vaśagenedaṁ kṛtaṁ te pannagāśubham |  
kāraṇaṁ vai tvam apyatra tasmāt tvam api kilbiṣī || 28 ||

The hunter said:– If you have done this evil act, incited by another, then you are still guilty because you are an accomplice in the crime.

mṛt pātrasya kriyāyām hi daṇḍa cakrādayo yathā |  
kāraṇatve prakalpyante tathā tvam api pannaga || 29 ||

As in the making of a clay vessel, the potter's wheel and rod and other things are all regarded as [instrumental] causes, so are you, O snake.

kilbiṣī cāpi me vadhyah kilbiṣī cāsi pannaga |  
ātmānaṁ kāraṇaṁ hyatra tvam ākhyāsi bhujaṅgama || 30 ||

One that is guilty deserves to be punished by me. You, O snake, are guilty. Indeed, you yourself have confessed that you have committed the crime.

sarpa uvāca

sarva ete hyasvavaśā daṇḍa cakrādayo yathā |  
tathāham api tasmān me naiṣa doṣo matastava || 31 ||

The snake said:– As all these, viz., the potter's wheel, rod, and other things, are not *independent* causes, even so neither am I an independent cause.

athavā matam etat te te'pyanyonya prayojakāḥ |  
kārya-kāraṇa sandeho bhavaty-anyonyacodanāt || 32 ||

If you are of the opinion that they [the accessories] are for the use of others, a doubt arises regarding their relation as cause and effect.

evam̐ sati na doṣo me nāsmi vadhyo na kilbiṣī |  
kilbiṣam̐ samavāye syān manyase yadi kilbiṣam̐ || 33 ||

Such being the case, it is no fault of mine, nor do I deserve death on this account, nor am I guilty of any sin. Or, if you think that there is sin [in even such causation], the sin actually lies in the aggregate of causes.

lubdhaka uvāca

kāraṇam̐ yadi na syād vai na kartā syās tvam̐ apyuta |  
vināṣe kāraṇam̐ tvaṁ ca tasmād vadhyo'si me mataḥ || 34 ||

The hunter said:– If you consider yourself to be neither the prime-cause nor the agent in this matter, you are still the *actual* cause of the death (of this child). Therefore, you do deserve death in my opinion.

asatyapi kṛte kārye neha pannaga lipyate |  
tasmān nātraiva hetuḥ syād vadhyaḥ kiṁ bahu bhāṣase || 35 ||

If you think that when a crime is committed, the doer is not implicated therein, then there can be no cause whatsoever in this matter; you still deserve death. Why are you talking nonsense?'

sarpa uvāca

kāryābhāve kriyā na syāt satya satyapi kāraṇe |  
tasmāt tvam̐ asmin hetau me vācya hetur viśeṣataḥ || 36 ||  
  
yady ahaṁ kāraṇatvena mato lubdhaka tattvataḥ |  
anyaḥ prayoge syād atra kilbiṣī jantu nāśane || 37 ||

The snake said:– Whether any cause exists or not, no effect is produced without an (intermediate) act. Therefore, both Mṛtyu and I are equally the cause, but even then, the blame is more fairly attributed to Mṛtyu. If you think that I alone am to blame for the death of this child then you are in error. With proper reflection one will come to the conclusion that it is Mṛtyu alone who is to blame.<sup>9</sup>

lubdhaka uvāca

vadhyas tvaṁ mama durbuddhe bāla-ghātī nṛśaṁsa kṛt |  
bhāṣase kiṁ bahu punar vadhyaḥ san pannagādhamā || 38 ||

The hunter said:– O malicious snake! You are a child-killer and a wretched doer of atrocious acts. Not deserving of life, why do you prattle so much? You deserve death. You low-life snake!

sarpa uvāca

yathā havīm̐ṣi juhvānā makhe vai lubdhakartvijah |  
na phalaṁ prāpnvanty atra paraloke tathā hyaham̐ || 39 ||

The snake said:– O hunter, just as the officiating priests at a sacrifice do not acquire the merit of the act by offering oblations of clarified butter to the fire [the merit going to the

<sup>9</sup> The commentator explains this passage by the illustration that in the act of felling a tree the effect is produced by the intermediate act of raising the axe by some sentient agent, but that in the case of the burning of a forest, the fire is produced by the friction of the dry branches of trees without the intervention of any sentient agent.

yajamāna - host], even so should I be regarded with respect as to the result in this connection.

bhīṣma uvāca

tathā bruvati tasmimstu pannage mṛtyu-codite |  
ājagāma tato mṛtyuḥ pannagaṁ cābravīd idam || 40 ||

Bhishma continued:– ‘The snake having been directed by Mṛtyu to kill the child, repeatedly proclaimed his innocence and blamed Mṛtyu for the death. Suddenly Mṛtyu himself appeared there and addressed the snake.

mṛtyu uvāca

kālenāhaṁ praṇuditaḥ pannaga tvām acūcudam |  
vināśa hetur nāsyā tvam ahaṁ vā prāṇinaḥ śiśoḥ || 41 ||

Mṛtyu said:– Instigated by Kāla (Time), I, O snake, sent you on this errand, and neither are you nor am I the effective cause of this child’s death.

yathā vāyur jala-dharān vikarṣati tatas tataḥ |  
tadvaj jaladavat sarpa kālasyāhaṁ vaśānugaḥ || 42 ||

Just as the clouds are blown here and there by the wind, I am like the clouds, O snake, under the influence of Time.

sāttvikā rājasāścaiva tāmasā ye ca kecana |  
bhāvāḥ kālātmakāḥ sarve pravartante hi jantuṣu || 43 ||

All conditions appertaining to Sattva or Rajas, or Tamas that function in all creatures are time-dependent and are instigated by Kāla.

jaṅgamāḥ sthāvarāścaiva divi vā yadi vā bhuvi |  
sarve kālātmakāḥ sarpa kālātmakamidam jagat || 44 ||

All creatures, mobile and immobile that are in heaven<sup>10</sup> or on earth, are all under the control of Kāla. The whole universe is the form of Kāla.

pravṛttayaśca yā loke tathaiva ca nivṛttayaḥ |  
tāsāṁ vikṛtayo yāśca sarvaṁ kālātmakaṁ smṛtam || 45 ||

All evolutions and involutions<sup>11</sup>, of the world as also all their modifications — everything is said to be influenced by Kāla.

ādityaścandramā viṣṇur-āpo vāyuḥ śatakratuḥ |  
agniḥ khaṁ pṛthivī mitra oṣadhyo vasavastathā || 46 ||

saritaḥ sāgarāścaiva bhāvābhāvau ca pannaga |  
sarve kālena sṛjyante hriyante ca tathā punaḥ || 47 ||

Surya (Sun), Soma (Moon), Vishnu, Water, Wind, the King of the devas – Indra, Fire, Sky, Earth, Mitra and Parjanya, Aditi, and the Vasus, Rivers and Oceans, all existent and non-existent objects, are created and destroyed by Kāla, again and again.

evaṁ jñātvā katham mām tvam sadoṣaṁ sarpa manyase |  
atha caivaṅgate doṣo mayi tvam api doṣavān || 48 ||

<sup>10</sup> So even the gods themselves and all the other denizens of the heavenly realms are conditioned by time.

<sup>11</sup> Lit. *pravṛtti* & *nivṛtti* - has a much greater application than just evolution and involution - it applies on a cosmic scale as well as an individual's introversion and extroversion.

Knowing this, why do you, O snake, consider me to be guilty? If any fault attaches to me in this, you also would be to blame.

sarpa uvāca

nirdoṣaṁ doṣavantaṁ vā na tvā mṛtyo bravīmy-aham |  
tvayāhaṁ codita iti bravīmy etāvad eva tu || 49 ||

The snake said:— I do not, O Mṛtyu, blame you, nor do I absolve you from all blame. I only aver that I am directed and influenced (in my actions) by you.

yadi kāle tu doṣo'sti yadi tatrāpi neṣyate |  
doṣo naiva parīkṣyo me na hyatrādhikṛtā vayam || 50 ||

If Kāla is indeed blameworthy, or if it is best not to blame him, it is not for me to examine the fault. We have no right to do so.

nirmokṣastvasya doṣasya mayā kāryo yathā tathā |  
mṛtyo vidoṣaḥ syāmeva yathā tan me prayojanam || 51 ||

As it is incumbent on me to absolve *myself* only from this blame, my intention is not to prove the guilt of Mṛtyu.

bhīṣma uvāca

sarpo'thārjunakaṁ prāha śrutaṁ te mṛtyu bhāṣitam |  
nānāgasam mām pāṣena santāpayitum arhasi || 52 ||

Bhishma continued:— Then the snake, addressing Arjunaka, said —You have heard what Mṛtyu has said. Therefore, can you please stop tormenting me, who am guiltless, by binding me so tightly with this cord.

lubdhaka uvāca

mṛtyoḥ śrutaṁ me vacanaṁ tava caiva bhujaṅgama |  
naiva tāvad vidoṣatvaṁ bhavati tvayi pannaga || 53 ||

The hunter said:— I have listened to you, O snake, as well as to what Mṛtyu has to say, but nothing that has been said absolves you from all blame.

mṛtyus tvaṁ caiva heturhi jantorasya vināśane |  
ubhayaṁ kāraṇaṁ manye na kāraṇam akāraṇam || 54 ||

Both Mṛtyu and yourself are the causes of the child's death. I consider both of you to be equally the cause. Not one guilty and the other innocent.

dhiṁ mṛtyuṁ ca durātmānaṁ krūraṁ duḥkha-karaṁ satām |  
tvāṁ caivāhaṁ vadhiṣyāmi pāpaṁ pāpasya kāraṇam || 55 ||

Accursed be the wicked and vengeful Mṛtyu that causes such grief to even good people. You I shall certainly kill who is sinful and actively engaged, in iniquitous acts!

mṛtyur uvāca

vivaśau kāla vaśagāvāvāṁ tadd iṣṭakāriṇau |  
nāvāṁ doṣeṇa gantavyau yadi samyak prapaśyasi || 56 ||

Mṛtyu said:— Neither of us are free agents, but both of us are dependent on Kāla, and ordained to do our appointed work. You should not find fault with either of us if you consider this matter thoroughly.

lubdhaka uvāca

yuvāmubhau kālavaśau yadi vai mṛtyu pannagau |  
harṣa krodhau kathaṁ syātām etad icchāmi veditum || 57 ||



The hunter said:— If you both, O snake and Mṛtyu, are dependent on Kāla, I am curious to know how happiness (arising from intentionally doing good) and anger (arising from frustration of desires) are caused.<sup>12</sup>

mṛtyur uvāca

yāḥ kāścid iha ceṣṭāḥ syuḥ sarvāḥ kāla pracoditāḥ |  
pūrvam evaitad uktaṁ hi mayā lubdhaka kālataḥ || 58 ||  
tasmād ubhau kālavaśāvāvān tad diṣṭakāriṇau |  
nāvān doṣeṇa gantavyau tvayā lubdhaka karhicit || 59 ||

Mṛtyu said:— Whatever is done is accomplished under the influence of Kāla. As I have said before, O hunter, that Kāla is the cause of everything and that for this reason we both, are under his control, and we both acting under his directive, do our appointed work. Therefore, O hunter, we two do not deserve censure from you in any way!

bhīṣma uvāca

athopagamyā kālāstu tasmin dharmārtha samśaye |  
abravīt pannagaṁ mṛtyuṁ lubdham arjunakaṁ ca tam || 60 ||

Bhishma continued:— Then Kāla suddenly arrived on the scene of disputation on this point of morality, and spoke thus to the snake and Mṛtyu and the hunter Arjunaka assembled together.

kāla uvāca

naivāhaṁ nāpyayaṁ mṛtyur nāyaṁ lubdhaka pannagaḥ |  
kilbiṣī jantu maraṇe na vayaṁ hi prayojakāḥ || 61 ||

Kāla said:— Neither Mṛtyu, nor this snake, nor I, O hunter, am guilty of the death of any creature. We are neither the instigators nor the agents.

akarod yad ayaṁ karma tanno'rjunaka codakam |  
praṇāśa hetur nānyo'sya vadhya'te'yaṁ svakarmanā || 62 ||

O Arjunaka, the Karma of this child was the instigating cause of our action in this matter. There was no other cause by which this child died. It has met with death as the result of its past Karma.

yad anena kṛtaṁ karma tenāyaṁ nidhanaṁ gataḥ |  
vināśa hetuḥ karmāsyā sarve karma-vaśā vyaṁ || 63 ||

It's the Karma which this child has done which is the cause of its death. We are all subject to the influence of our respective Karmas.

karma dāyādavānllokaḥ karma sambandha lakṣaṇaḥ |  
karmāṇi codayantīha yathānyonyān tathā vyaṁ || 64 ||

In this samsāra, Karma is an aid to Liberation even as sons & grandsons are<sup>13</sup>, and Karma also is an indicator of virtue and vice. In life we influence one another to act, and it is Karma which instigates us.

yathā mṛt piṇḍataḥ kartā kurute yadyad icchati |  
evam ātma kṛtaṁ karma mānavaḥ pratipadyate || 65 ||

As people make from a lump of clay whatever they wish, even so do people attain various results determined by their Karma.

<sup>12</sup> The question is: If they both believe that Time is the primary cause of everything then how does agency and intent have a part to play in one's failures and successes?

<sup>13</sup> Sons and grandsons aid us in our liberation by performing our funeral rites and sraddha ceremonies.

yathā chāyātapau nityaṁ susambaddhau nirantaram |  
tathā karma ca kartā ca sambaddhāv ātma karmabhiḥ || 66 ||

As light and shadow are inseparably related to each other, so are people related to Karma-outcomes through their own actions.

evaṁ nāhaṁ na vai mṛtyur na sarpo na tathā bhavān |  
na ceyaṁ brāhmaṇī vṛddhā śísur evātra kāraṇam || 67 ||

Therefore upon deep reflection, neither you, nor I, nor Mṛtyu, nor the snake, nor this old Brahmana lady, is responsible for this child's death. He himself is the cause.

tasmīns tathā bruvāṇe tu brāhmaṇī gautamī nṛpa |  
svakarma pratyayāñllokān matvārjunakam abravīt || 68 ||

O king, hearing Kāla expounding on the matter in this way, Gautami, being totally convinced that folks suffer the consequences of their actions, spoke thus to Arjunaka:—

gautamī uvāca

naiva kālo na bhujago na mṛtyur iha kāraṇam |  
svakarmabhir ayaṁ bālaḥ kālena nidhanaṁ gataḥ || 69 ||

Gautami said:— Neither Kāla, nor Mṛtyu, nor the snake, is the cause in this matter. This child has met with death as the result of its own Karma.

mayā ca tat kṛtaṁ karma yenāyaṁ me mṛtaḥ sutaḥ |  
yātu kālas tathā mṛtyur muñcārjunaka pannagam || 70 ||

I too, in the past must have acted in a such way that my son has died [as a consequence]. Let now Kāla and Mṛtyu retire from this place, and you too O Arjunaka, release this snake.

bhīṣma uvāca

tato yathāgataṁ jagmur mṛtyuḥ kālo'tha pannagaḥ |  
abhūdviroṣo'rjunako viśokā caiva gautamī || 71 ||

Bhishma continued:— Then Kāla and Mṛtyu and the snake all departed to their respective destinations, and both Gautami and the hunter were consoled.

etacchrutvā śamaṁ gaccha mā bhūś cintāparo nṛpa |  
svakarma pratyayāñllokāns trīn viddhi manujarṣabha || 72 ||

Having heard all this, O king, you too should forego all grief, and be at peace. People attain to various states of being as a result of their own Karma.

na tu tvayā kṛtaṁ pārtha nāpi duryodhanena vai |  
kālena tat kṛtaṁ viddhi vihatā yena pārvivāḥ || 73 ||

This tribulation in which you find yourself, has neither been of your own intentional creation, nor of Duryodhana's. These great kings have all been slain [in this war] as a result of Kāla (Karma).

vaiśampāyana uvāca

ityetad vacanaṁ śrutvā babhūva vigata-jvaraḥ |  
yudhiṣṭhiro mahātejāḥ papracchedaṁ ca dharmavit || 74 ||

Vaisampayana said:— Having heard all this discourse from grandfather Bhīṣma, the powerful and virtuous Yudhishtira was consoled and freed from angst, and again asked more questions.

# THE CONVERSATION OF KING ŚIBI

Vana Parva adhyāya 132 - 133

tām deva samitiṁ tasya vāsavaśca viśāmpate |  
abhyāgacchan nṛpavaraṁ jñātum agniśca bhārata || 22 ||  
jijñāsamānau varadau mahātmānam uśīnaram |  
indraḥ śyenaḥ kapoto'gnirbhūtvā yajñe'bhijagmatuḥ || 23

Mārkaṇḍeya said:– "One day it was resolved by the gods that they should descend on the earth and test the goodness and virtue of king Sivi, the son of Usinara. Agni took the form of a pigeon and Indra took the form of a hawk and went to the yajña of King Śibi.

urum rājñāḥ samāsādyā kapotaḥ śyenaḥ bhayāt |  
śaraṇārthī tadā rājannilīye bhaya pīḍitaḥ || 24 ||

The pigeon fell upon the lap of king Sivi seeking refuge from apparent fear of the hawk that was pursuing it."



śyena uvāca

dharmātmānam tvāhurekaṁ sarve rājan mahīkṣitaḥ |  
sa vai dharma viruddhaṁ tvaṁ kasmāt karma cikīrśasi || 1 ||  
vihitaṁ bhakṣaṇaṁ rājan pīḍyamānasya me kṣudhā |  
māhimsīr dharma lobhena dharmam utsrjya mā naśaḥ || 2 ||

The hawk said:– "All the kings of the earth declare that you alone are the embodiment of Dharma. So how will you act in a way that is contrary to all Dharma. I am exceedingly afflicted by hunger and pigeons are my natural food. Please do not be obsessed with specific Dharmas — by giving refuge to this pigeon you are contravening another Dharma."

rājovāca

saṁtrasta rūpas trāṇārthī tvatto bhīto mahādvija |  
mat sakāśam anuprptaḥ prāṇa gṛdhnurayaṁ dvijaḥ || 3 ||

The King Śibi said:– "O king of birds, this pigeon from fear of you has in desperation sought refuge with me.

evam abhyāgatasyeha kapotasyābhayārthinaḥ |  
apradāne paro dharmāḥ kiṁ tvaṁ śyeneha paśyasi || 4 ||

Therefore this pigeon relying on my protection should not be betrayed by me, this is the highest Dharma, how can you not see this?

praspandamānaḥ saṁbhrāntaḥ kapotaḥ śyena lakṣyate |  
matsakāśaṁ jīvitārthī tasya tyāgo vigarhitaḥ || 5 ||

See how terrified this pigeon is and its heart is racing in fear. In order to save its life it has come to me. Abandoning it now would be a censurable act on my part.

yo hi kaścid dvijān hanyād gām vā lokasya mātaram |  
śaraṇāgataṁ ca tyajate tulyaṁ teśāṁ hi pātakam || 6 ||

One who murders a learned priest, one who kills the cow — the mother of the world, and one who abandons one who comes for refuge are equal in their iniquity."

śyena uvāca

āhārat sarva bhūtāni sambhavanti mahīpate |  
āhāreṇa vivardhante tena jīvanti jantavaḥ || 7 ||

The hawk said:— "O king, all beings are born from food, they develop through food, and food is what sustains them.

śakyate dustyaje'pyarthe cirarātrāya jīvitum |  
na tu bhojanam utsrjya śakyaṁ vartayitum ciram || 8 ||

If one renounces something which is very dear, one can still live for a very long time, but without food one cannot live for very long at all.

bhakṣyād vilopitasyādya mama prāṇā viśāmpate |  
visrjyakāyameśyanti panthānam apunarbhavam || 9 ||

Today you have deprived me of my food, my life breath will soon leave my body and death will be my lot.

pramṛte mayi dharmātman putra dārādi naṅkṣyati |  
rakṣamāṇaḥ kapotaṁ tvaṁ bahūn prāṇān na rakṣasi || 10 ||

O righteous one, my spouse and chicks depend on me — by protecting this single pigeon's life you are neglecting many lives.

bahūnyo bādgate dharmo na sa dharmāḥ kudharma tat |  
avirodhāt tu yo dharmāḥ sa dharmāḥ satya vikrama || 11 ||

O chivalrous king, one so-called Dharma that obstructs another Dharma is not Dharma it is the opposite, true Dharma is that which does not obstruct another.

virodhiśu mahīpāla niścītya gurulāghavam |  
na bādha vidyate yatra taṁ dharmāṁ samupācaret || 12 ||

If two Dharmas are in conflict then the merits and demerits of both should be carefully assessed and a conclusion reached with a compromise between the two.

guru lāghavam ājñāya dharmādharmā viniścāye |  
yato bhūyāns tato rājan kuru dharma viniścayam || 13 ||

Considering the merits and demerits, Dharma and Adharma and the sin and virtue involved in this matter, please make a considered decision."

rājovāca

bahu-kalyāṇa saṁyuktaṁ bhāśase vihagottama |  
suparṇaḥ pakṣirāt kiṁ tvaṁ dharmāṁ jñātvā'bhībhāśase || 14 ||

The king said:— "O best of birds, you speak rationally and beneficially, are you not perhaps Garuda himself? You are apparently a scholar of Dharma.

tathāhi dharma saṁyuktaṁ bahu citraṁ ca bhāśase |  
na te'sty aviditaṁ kiñcid iti tvāṁ lakṣayāmyaham || 15 ||

Your eloquence regarding Dharma is amazing and I'm convinced that there is nothing that you don't know.

śaraṇaiśi parityāgaṁ kathaṁ sādhviti manyase |  
āhārārthaṁ samārambhas tava cāyaṁ vihaṅgama || 16 ||

But still, how can you consider that the abandonment of a refugee is a virtue? I am at a loss to understand this. All this is for sake of your dinner.

śakyaścāpy anyathā kartum āhāro'pyadhikas tvayā |  
go-vṛṣo vā varāho vā mṛgo vā mahīśopi vā |  
tvadartham adya kriyatām yacchānyadiha kāṅkṣasi || 17 ||

But for your sake another type of food can be provided which will exceed the flesh of this pigeon. Whatever you desire can be made available — beef, pork, venison or buffalo, just say what you'd like and I'll have it provided."

śyena uvāca

na varāhaṁ na cokṣāṇaṁ na mṛgān vividhāṁs tathā |  
bhakṣayāmi mahārāja kiṁ mamānyena kenacit || 18 ||

The hawk said:— "I don't want to eat pork, nor beef, nor venison nor any kind of other meat. What else would I want?

yastu me daiva-vihito bhakṣaḥ kṣatriya puṅgava |  
tam utsṛja mahīpāla kapotam imam eva me || 19 ||

O great king, this pigeon is my ordained food, that alone will I eat, please hand it over to me.

śyenāḥ kapotān attīti sthitireśā sanātānī |  
mā rājan sāram ajñātvā kadalī skandhamāsaja || 20 ||

From time immemorial pigeons have been food for hawks, please do not ignore the essence of Dharma, don't take a banana trunk as your support."

rājovāca

rāṣṭraṁ śivīnāmṛddhaṁ vai dadāni tava khecara |  
yaṁ vā kāmāyase kāmāṁ śyena sarvaṁ dadāni te || 21 ||

The king said:— "O sky-mover, I will give you this entire prosperous kingdom of mine, and whatever other object you desire.

vinemaṁ pakṣiṇaṁ śyana śaraṇārthinam āgatam |  
yenemaṁ sthāpayethās tvaṁ karmaṇā pakṣisattama |  
tad ācakṣva kariṣyāmi na hi dāsyē kapotakam || 22 ||

But I can never abandon this vulnerable bird that has come to me for refuge. Whatever favour you want in order to give up your claim on this pigeon please tell me and I'll fulfill your desire, but I shall never give you this pigeon."

śyena uvāca

uśīnara kapote te yadi sneho narādhipa |  
ātmano māṁsam utkr̥tya kapota tulayā dhṛtam || 23 ||

The hawk said:— "O king of Ushinara! If you have so much affection for this pigeon then substitute your own flesh for its flesh according to weight.

yadā samaṁ kapotena tava māṁsaṁ nṛpottama |  
tvayā pradayaṁ tan mahyaṁ sā me tuṣṭir bhaviṣyati || 24 ||

Weigh your flesh and the pigeon in a scale and give me the exact weight of the pigeon, that will be sufficient for me."



rājovāca

anugraham imam manye śyena yanmābhiyācase |  
tasmāt te'dya pradāsyāmi sva māmsam tulayā dhṛtam || 26 ||

The king said:— "I consider it a great honour that you are requesting my flesh as a substitute, I shall immediately cut off a piece of flesh and weigh it in the scale."

lomaśa uvāca

utkr̥tya svamāmsam tu rājā paramadharmavit |  
tolayāmāsa kaunteya kapotena samam vibho || 27 ||

Lomaśa said:— "O Yuddhisthira, that virtuous king then began to cut pieces of his own flesh to weigh against the pigeon.

dhriyamāṇaḥ kapotastu māmsenātyatiricyate |  
punaścotkr̥tyamāmsāni rājā prādāduśīnaraḥ || 28 ||  
na vidyate yadā māmsam kapotena samam dhṛtam |  
tata utkr̥ttamāmsa'sāvāruha svayam tulām || 29 ||

But the pigeon sitting in the other pan of the scales was much heavier. So the king cut more flesh and placed it in the pan, yet still the pigeon remained heavier. Again and again he added flesh but the pigeon was always heavier. At last the king himself sat on the pan."

śyena uvāca

indro'ham asmi dharmajña kapoto havya-vāḍayam |  
jijñāsamānau dharma tvam yajñavāṭam upāgatau ||

The hawk said:— "O knower of Dharma, I am Indra and the pigeon is Agni, we came here to your sacrificial pavillion to test you.

yatte māmsāni gātrebhya ukṛtāni viśāmpate |  
eśa te śāśvatī kīrtir lokān abhibhaviśyati || 31 ||

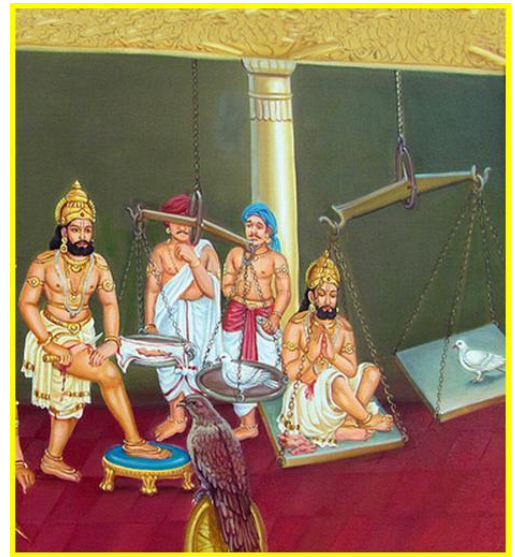
These lumps of flesh that you cut from your own body will become beacons of light that will illumine your greatness throughout the world.

yāvalloke manuṣyās tvam kathayiśyanti pāṛthiva |  
tāvat kīrtiśca lokāśca sthāsyanti tava śāśvatāḥ || 32 ||

Your fame in this world O King, will remain perpetually as long as people will continue to retell your story."

ityuktvā bhūmipataye tasmai dattvā yathepsitam |  
praśasya jagmatū rājann indrāgnī tuṣṭamānasau || 33 ||  
uśīnaro'pidharmātmā dharmenāvṛtyarodasī |  
vibhrājamāno vapuśā'pyāruha triviṣṭapam || 34 ||

Having blessed the king and fulfilled all his desires, Indra, Agni being exceedingly pleased departed, having spread his fame throughout the world, he transformed into a body of light and ascended into the sky.



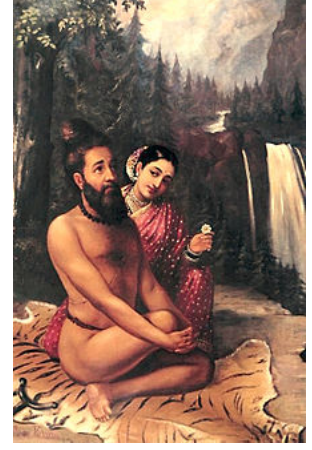
# THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN VIŚVAMITRA AND THE CHANDALA

## Viśvāmitra-Śvapaca Saṁvādaḥ

Shanti Parva - 139 (141)

Brahmarshi Vishvamitra (*viśvā-mitra* = friend of the world<sup>14</sup>) is one of the most venerated rishis or sages of ancient India. He is also credited as the author of most of Mandala 3 of the Rigveda, including the Gāyatri Mantra.

The story of Vishvamitra is narrated in the Balakanda of Valmiki Ramayana. Vishvamitra was a valiant warrior and the son of Gadhi and great-grandson of Kusha also called Kaushika (descendant of Kusha). Vishvamitra was originally the Chandravanshi King of Kanyakubja but became a brahmaṇa through his spiritual achievements.



yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

hīne paramake dharme sarva lokātilaṅghini |  
adharme dharmatām nīte dharme cādharmatām gate || 1 ||

Yudhishtira said:– "When the highest standard of Dharma declines and is transgressed by all, when unrighteousness becomes righteousness, and righteousness assumes the form of its reverse,

maryādāsu prabhinnāsu kṣubhite dharma niścaye |  
rājabhiḥ pīḍite loke corair vāpi viśāṁ pate || 2 ||

when all wholesome restraints disappear, and all truths in respect of Dharma are disturbed and confounded, when people are oppressed by their rulers and robbers,

sarvāśrameṣu mūḍheṣu karmasūpahateṣu ca |  
kāmaṁ mohācca lobhācca bhayaṁ paśyatsu bhārata || 3 ||

when people of all the four modes of life<sup>15</sup> become confused in respect of their duties, and all acts lose their merit, when people are in anxiety from every direction due to selfish-desire (*kāma*) and delusion (*moha*) and greed (*lobha*)<sup>16</sup>,

aviśvasteṣu sarveṣu nitya-bhīteṣu pārthiva |  
nikṛtyā hanyamāneṣu vañcayatsu parasparam || 4 ||

when all creatures cease to trust one another, and are always fearful and suspicious of each other, when they kill one another by devious means and deceive one another in their mutual dealings,

<sup>14</sup> Sanskrit words have different meanings depending on where the word is broken. Vi = special, śva = dog, mitra = friend. So 'Vishvamitra' can either mean "friend of the world" or "special friend of the dogs".

<sup>15</sup> The four modes of life or optional vocations are:– *brahmacarya* - student, *grihastha* - householder, *vānaprastha* - a forest hermit and *sanyāsa* - renunciate. When first formulated they were optional vocations chosen upon completion of study. Later they became ideal sequential stages especially for Brahmins.

<sup>16</sup> These three form part of a group of 6 afflictive emotions, the other three being anger (*krodha*) arrogance/hubris (*mada*) and malicious envy (*mātsarya*).

sampradīpteṣu deśeṣu brāhmaṇye cābhipīḍite |  
avarṣati ca parjanya mitho bhede samutthite || 5 ||

when houses are burnt down throughout the country, when the priests become exceedingly afflicted, when the clouds do not shower a drop of rain, when every one's hand is turned against every one's neighbour,

sarvasmin dasyusādbhūte pṛthivyām upajīvane |  
kenasvid brāhmaṇo jīvejjaghanye kāla āgate || 6 ||  
atityakṣuḥ putra pautrān anukrośān narādhipa |  
katham āpatsu varteta tan me brūhi pitāmaha || 7 ||

when all the crops and agriculture falls under the power of wicked exploiters, when, indeed, such a season of terrible distress sets in, by what means should a spiritual aspirant live who is unwilling to abandon compassion and offspring? How, indeed, should a dedicated spiritual aspirant maintain himself at such a time? Tell me this, O grandsire!

katham ca rājā varteta loke kaluṣatām gate |  
kathamarthācca dharmācca na hīyeta parantapa || 8 ||

How also should the ruler act at such a time when iniquity overtakes the world? How, O scorcher of foes, should the ruler conduct himself so that he might not transgress both righteousness (*dharma*) and profit (*artha*)?"

bhīṣma uvāca

rāja mūlā mahārāja yoga kṣema suvṛṣṭayaḥ |  
prajāsu vyādhayaścaiva maraṇaṁ ca bhayāni ca || 9 ||  
kṛtām tretā dvāparaśca kaliśca bharatarṣabha |  
rāja mūlāni sarvāṇi mama nāstyatra saṁśayaḥ || 10 ||

Bhishma said:— "O mighty-armed one, the peace and prosperity of subjects,<sup>17</sup> sufficiency and seasonableness of rain, ill-health, death and other anxieties, are all dependent on the Government.<sup>18</sup> I have no doubt also in this. The yugas — *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dvāpara*, and *Kali*, are all dependent on the governance of the rulers."

tasmīns tvabhyāgate kāle prajānām doṣa kārake |  
vijñāna balam āsthāya jīvitavyaṁ tadā bhavet || 11 ||

When such a season of misery for the citizens as has been described by you sets in, the righteous should maintain themselves by the aid of their practical judgment.

atrāpy-udāharantīmam itihāsaṁ purāṇanam |  
viśvāmitrasya saṁvādaṁ caṇḍālasya ca pakkaṇe || 12 ||

In this connection is cited the old story of the discourse between Visvamitra and the Chandala<sup>19</sup> in a hamlet inhabited by Chandalas.

tretā dvāparayoḥ sandhau purā daiva vidhi kramāt |  
anāvṛṣṭir abhūd ghorā rājan dvādaśa vārṣikī || 13 ||

<sup>17</sup> Literally, 'preservation of what has been obtained, and acquisition of what is desired.'

<sup>18</sup> All these are dependent upon the good policies of the sitting Government. When Governments become corrupt, overly influenced by self-serving lobby groups, adopt ill conceived policies, become obsessed with their own self-importance then the citizens suffer.

<sup>19</sup> Chandalas are on the very bottom of the social hierarchy, they subsist by hunting and scavenging and disposing of dead bodies. They live on the outskirts of the village and are considered untouchable. They are also well-known for their breeding and consumption of dogs.

Towards the end of *Treta* and the beginning of *Dvāpara*, a dreadful drought occurred throughout the land, extending over twelve years, in consequence of what the gods had ordained.

prajānām abhivṛddhānām yugānte paryupasthite |  
 tretā nirmokṣa samaye dvāpara pratipādane || 14 ||  
 na vavarṣa sahasrākṣaḥ pratilomo'bhavad guruḥ |  
 jagāma dakṣiṇām mārgaṁ somo vyāvṛtta lakṣaṇaḥ || 15 ||

At that time of the conjunction of the yugas, when the period came for many creatures superannuated by age to lay down their lives, Indra, the thousand-eyed deity of heaven showered no rain. The planet Jupiter began to move in a retrograde motion, and the Moon abandoning his own orbit, receded towards the south.

nāvaśyāyo'pi rātryante kuta evābhrarājayaḥ |  
 nadyaḥ saṅkṣipta toyaughāḥ kvacid antargatābhavan || 16 ||

Not even a dew-drop could be detected at dawn, what need then be said of clouds gathering together? The rivers all shrank into narrow rivulets.

sarāṁsi saritaścaiva kūpāḥ prasravaṇāni ca |  
 hatat viṭkānya lakṣyanta nisargād daiva kārītāt || 17 ||  
 upaśuṣka jalasthāyā vinivṛtta sabhā prapā |  
 nivṛtta yajña svādhyāyā nirvaṣaṭkāra maṅgalā || 18 ||

Everywhere lakes and wells and springs disappeared and lost their beauty in consequence of that severe drought which the gods brought about. Water having become scarce, the places set up by charity for its distribution became desolate.<sup>20</sup> The priests abstained from sacrifices and recitation of the Vedas. They no longer uttered mantras or performed any other propitiatory rites.

utsanna kṛṣi gorakṣyā nivṛtta vipaṇāpaṇā |  
 nivṛtta pūga samayā sampranaṣṭa mahotsavā || 19 ||

Agriculture and animal husbandry were abandoned. Markets and shops were shut. People no longer collected diverse kinds of articles for making offerings to the gods. All festivals and amusements ceased.

asthi kaṅkāla saṅkīrṇā hāhābhūta janākulā |  
 śūnya bhūyiṣṭha nagarā dagdha grāma niveśanā || 20 ||

Everywhere heaps of bones were visible and every place resounded with the shrill cries and yells of fierce creatures.<sup>21</sup> The cities became empty of inhabitants. Villages and hamlets were burnt down.

kvaciccoraiḥ kvacicchastraiḥ kvacid rājabhir āturaiḥ |  
 paraspara bhayāccaiva śūnya bhūyiṣṭha nirjanā || 21 ||

Some people were dispersed due to depredations by robbers, some due to being attacked, and some by exploitation of cruel rulers, and others in fear of one another, began to flee.

<sup>20</sup> In India, during the hot months, charitable persons set up shady thatched booths by the sides of roads for the distribution of cool water and raw sugar and oats soaked in water. Along any of the main roads running through the country, one may still see hundreds of such booths affording real relief to thirsty travellers.

<sup>21</sup> Such as *Rakshasas* and *Pisachas* and carnivorous birds and beasts.

gata daivata saṅkalpā vṛddha bāla vinākṛtā |  
gojāvi mahiṣair hīnā paraspara harāharā || 22 ||

Temples became desolate. The aged were forcibly turned out of their houses. Cows and goats and sheep and buffaloes fought (for food) and perished in large numbers.

hata viprā hatārakṣā pranaṣṭauṣadhi sañcayā |  
śyāva bhūta naraprāyā babhūva vasudhā tadā || 23 ||

The priests began to die everywhere. Protection was at an end. Herbs and plants were dried up. The earth became shorn of all her beauty and exceedingly awful like the trees in a crematorium.

tasmin prati-bhaye kāle kṣiṇe dharme yudhiṣṭhira |  
babhramuḥ kṣudhitā martyāḥ khādantaḥ sma parasparam || 24 ||

In that period of terror, when Dharma was nowhere practiced, O Yudhishtira, people due to starvation lost their senses and began to eat one another.

ṛṣayo niyamāms tyaktvā parityaktāgni daivatāḥ |  
āśramān samparityajya paryadhāvan nitas tataḥ || 25 ||

Even the *Rishis* themselves, giving up their vows and abandoning their fires and deities, and deserting their retreats in forest, began to wander hither and thither (in search of food).

viśvāmitro'tha bhagavān maharṣir aniketanaḥ |  
kṣudhā parigato dhīmān samantāt paryadhāvata || 26 ||

The venerable and mighty *Rishi* Vishvamitra, possessed of great intelligence, wandered homeless and afflicted with hunger.

tyaktvā dārāṁśca putrāṁśca kasmimścit janasamsadi |  
bhakṣyābhakṣya samo bhūtvā niragnir aniketanaḥ || 27 ||

Leaving his wife and son in some place of shelter, the *Rishi* wandered, fireless<sup>22</sup> and homeless, and regardless of food clean and unclean.

sa kadācit paripatañ śvapacānām niveśanam |  
himsrāṇām prāṇi-hantrīṇām āśasāda vane kvacit || 28 ||

One day he suddenly came upon a hamlet, in the midst of a forest, inhabited by cruel hunters dependent upon the slaughter of all kinds of creatures.

vibhinna kalaśākīrṇaṁ śva-carmāccādanāyutam |  
varāha khara bhagnāsthi kapāla ghaṭa saṅkulam || 29 ||

The little hamlet abounded with broken jars and clay pots. Dog-skins were spread out to dry. Bones and skulls of boars and asses, gathered in heaps, lay in different places.

mṛta chela paristūrṇaṁ nirmālya kṛta bhūṣaṇam |  
sarpa nirmoka mālābhiḥ kṛtachihna kuṭī maṭham || 30 ||

Cloths stripped from the corpses hung here and there, and the huts were adorned with garlands of dried flowers<sup>23</sup>. Many of the habitations were decorated with sloughs cast off by snakes.

<sup>22</sup> Having abandoned his agni-hotra fire which is kept alive and into which daily oblations are made.

<sup>23</sup> i.e., flowers already offered to the deities.



ulūka pakṣa dhvajibhir devatā yatanair vṛtam |  
loha ghaṇṭā pariṣkāraṁ śva-yūtha parivāritam || 31 ||

Here and there were shrines of gods with flags adorned with owls and other birds. Resounding with the tinkle of iron bells, the hamlet abounded with packs of dogs standing or lying on every side.

tat praviśya kṣudhāviṣṭo gādheḥ putro mahān ṛṣiḥ |  
āhārān veṣaṇe yuktaḥ paraṁ yatnaṁ samāsthitaḥ || 32 ||

The great *Rishi* Vishvamitra, urged by pangs of hunger and engaged in the search for food, entered that hamlet and endeavoured his best to find something to eat.

na ca kvacid avindatsa bhikṣamāṇo'pi kauśikaḥ |  
māṁsam annaṁ mūla phalam anyad vā tatra kiñcana || 33 ||

Though Vishvamitra the son of Kusika begged from door to door repeatedly, yet he failed to obtain any meat or rice or fruit or roots or any other kind of food.

aho kṛcchraṁ mayā prāptam iti niścitya kauśikaḥ |  
papāta bhūmau daurbalyāt tasmimś caṇḍāla pakkāṇe || 34 ||

He then, exclaiming, "Alas, great is the distress that has overtaken me!" he collapsed from weakness in that hamlet of the Chandalas.

cintayāmāsa sa muniḥ kiṁ nu me sukṛtaṁ bhavet |  
kathaṁ vṛthā na mṛtyuḥ syād iti pārthiva sattama || 35 ||

The sage began to reflect, saying to himself, "What is the best course of action for me now?" Indeed, the thought that occupied him was how he could avoid his immanent death.

sa dadarśa śva māṁsasya kutantīm vitatām muniḥ |  
caṇḍālasya gr̥he rājan sadyaḥ śastra hatasya ca || 36 ||

Looking around he saw a large haunch of flesh of a dog that had recently been slaughtered, lying on the floor of a Chandala's hovel.

sa cintayāmāsa tadā steyaṁ kāryam ito mayā |  
na hīdānīm upāyo'nyo vidyate prāṇa dhāraṇe || 37 ||

The sage reflected within himself and came to the conclusion that he would steal that meat. And he thought to himself, "now I have no means of sustaining my life".

āpatsu vihitāṁ steyaṁ viśiṣṭa samahīnataḥ |  
paraṁ paraṁ bhavet pūrvam asteyam iti niścayaḥ || 38 ||

Theft is permissible in times of distress for even an eminent person. It will not detract from one's glory. Even a priest for saving his life may do it. This is certain.

hīnād ādeyam ādau syāt samānāt tad anantaram |  
asambhavād ādadīta viśiṣṭād api dhārmikāt || 39 ||

In the first place one should first steal from malefactors. Failing that one may steal from one's equal. Failing an equal, one may steal from even an eminent and righteous person.

so'ham antāvasānānām haramāṇaḥ parigrahāt |  
na steya doṣaṁ paśyāmi hariṣyāmy etad āmiṣam || 40 ||

I shall then, at this time when my life itself is ebbing away, steal this meat. I do not see any demerit in such theft, therefore I shall steal this haunch of dog's meat.

etāṁ buddhiṁ samāsthāya viśvāmitro mahā muniḥ |  
tasmin deśe prasuṣvāpa patito yatra bhārata || 41 ||

Having formed this resolution, the great sage Vishvamisra laid himself down for sleep in that very place where had fallen.

sa vigādhāṁ niśāṁ dr̥ṣṭvā supte caṇḍāla-pakkaṇe |  
śanair utthāya bhagavān praviveśa kuṭīmaṭham || 42 ||

After the night had quite advanced and the whole Chandala hamlet had fallen asleep, the venerable Visvamisra, quietly rising up, slowly entered that hut.

sa supta iva caṇḍālaḥ śleṣmāpihita locanaḥ |  
paribhinnasvaro rūkṣa uvācā priya darśanaḥ || 43 ||

The Chandala housholder, of disagreeable appearance with eyes covered with discharge, was lying as if asleep, stirring, he said these harsh words in a raspy and dissonant voice.

kaḥ kutantrīṁ ghaṭayati supte caṇḍāla-pakkaṇe |  
jāgarmi nātra supto'smi hato'sīti ca dāruṇaḥ || 44 ||  
viśvamisraḥ tato bhītaḥ sahasā tam uvāca ha |  
tatra vṛḍhā kulamukhaḥ so dvegastena karmaṇā || 45 ||

The Chandala said, "Who's there, engaged in undoing the latch? The whole hamlet is asleep but I however, am awake and alert. Whoever you are, you are about to be slain."

Vishvamisra was terrified of that cruel chandala and was overcome with shame at the deed he was about to commit.

viśvāmitro'ham āyusmann āgato'ham bubhuṅkṣitaḥ |  
mā vadhīr mama sadbuddhe yadi samyak prapaśyasi || 46 ||

He responded, saying, "O you that are blessed with a long life, I am Vishvamisra. I have come here oppressed by the pangs of hunger. O intelligent one, if your sight be clear, please do not kill me,

caṇḍālas tad vacaś śrutvā maharṣer bhāvitātmanah |  
śayanād upasambhrānta iyeṣot patitum tataḥ || 47 ||

Hearing these words of that great *Rishi* who was very sincere, the Chandala rose up in terror from his bed and approached the sage.

sa visṛjyāśru netrābhyāṁ bahumānāt kṛtāñjaliḥ |  
uvāca kauśikaṁ rātrau brahman kiṁ te cikīrṣitam || 48 ||

Joining his palms reverently and with eyes bathed in tears, he humbly addressed Vishvamisra, saying:— "What do you seek here in the middle of the night, O Brahmin?"

viśvāmitrastu mātāṅgam uvāca parisāntvayan |  
kṣudhito'ham gata prāṇo hariṣyāmi śva jāghaṇīm || 49 ||

Conciliating the Chandala, Vishvamisra said:— "I am exceedingly hungry and about to die of starvation. I desire to take away that haunch of dog's meat."

avasīdanti me prāṇāḥ smṛtir me naśyati kṣudhā |  
durbalo naṣṭa-samjñāśca bhakṣyābhakṣya vivarjitaḥ |  
so'dharmaṁ budhyamāno'pi hariṣyāmi śvajāghaṇīm || 50 ||

"My life force is depleted, my memory is failing me due to hunger. I'm confused due to weakness. I no longer care about what is worthy to be eaten and what not. I know full well that this is wrong but still I desire to take away that haunch of dog's meat."

aṭan bhaikṣaṁ na vindāmi yadā yuṣmākam ālaye |  
tadā buddhiḥ kṛtā pāpe hariṣyāmi śvajāghanīm || 51 ||

"I wandered from house to house in this hamlet of yours and failed to obtain any alms whatsoever, I then set my heart upon this sinful act of taking away this haunch of dog's meat."

agnir mukhaṁ purodhāśca devānām śuciśādh vibhuḥ |  
yathāvat sarva-bhug brahmā tathā mām viddhi dharmataḥ || 52 ||

"Agni (Fire) is the mouth of the gods. He is also their priest. He should, therefore be given nothing but things that are pure and clean. At times, however, that great god becomes a consumer of everything. I have now become like him in that respect."

tam uvāca sa caṇḍālo maharṣe śṛṇu me vacaḥ |  
śrutvā tat tvam tathā'tiṣṭha yathā dharmān na hīyate || 53 ||

Hearing these words of the great *Rishi*, the Chandala answered him, saying, "Listen to me. Having listened to the truthful words that I am about to say, act in such a way that your religious merit may not be compromised."

dharmam vāpi viprarṣe śṛṇu yat te bravīmyahaṁ |  
śṛgālād adhamam śvānam pravadanti manīṣiṇaḥ |  
tasyāpyadhama uddeśaḥ śarīrasyoruḍjāghanī || 54 ||

Listen, O great *Rishi*, to what I advise you about your duty. The wise say that a dog is less clean than a jackal. The haunch, again, of a dog is a much worse part than other parts of its body.

nedam samyag vyavasitam maharṣe dharma garhitam |  
caṇḍālasvasya haraṇam abhakṣyasya viśeṣataḥ || 55 ||

O great *Rishi*, you've not thought this through, this theft of what belongs to a Chandala, and whatsmore of food that is unclean for you is inconsistent with righteousness (dharma).

sādhvanyam anupaśya tvam upāyam prāṇadhāraṇe |  
na māmsa lobhāt tapaso nāśaste syān mahā mune || 56 ||

May you be blessed, look for some other means for preserving your life. O great sage, don't let your penances suffer devaluation in consequence of this overwhelming desire for dog's meat.

jānatā vihitam dharmam na kāryo dharma saṅkaraḥ |  
mā sma dharmam parityākṣis tvam hi dharma bhṛtām varaḥ || 57 ||

Knowing as you do the duties laid down in the scriptures, you should not do a deed whose consequence is a confusion of duties.<sup>24</sup> Don't deviate from Dharma, for you are the foremost of all those who are experts in Dharma.

viśvāmitras tato rājan nityukto bharatarṣabha |  
kṣudhārtaḥ pratyuvācedam punar eva mahā-muniḥ || 58 ||

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<sup>24</sup> Meat-eating is permitted to commoners but forbidden to forest hermits - so transgressing these limits cause a confusion of duties.

Thus addressed, O king, the great *Rishi* Vishvamitra, afflicted by hunger, once more said:—

nirāhārasya sumahān mama kālo'bhidhāvataḥ |  
na vidyate'pyupāyaśca kaścīn me prāṇa-dhāraṇe || 59 ||

"A long time has passed by without my having taken even a morsel of food. I do not see any means whatsoever for preserving my life.

yena tena viśeṣeṇa karmaṇā yena kenacit |  
abhyuj-jīvet-sīdamānaḥ samartho dharmam ācaret || 60 ||

One should preserve one's life by any means in one's power without any judgement. Afterwards, when competent, one should strive to again practice Dharma.

aindro dharmāḥ kṣatriyānām brāhmaṇānām athāgnikaḥ |  
brahma-vahnir mama balaṁ bhakṣyāmi samayaṁ kṣudhā || 61 ||

The Kshatriyas should observe the practices of Indra<sup>25</sup>. It is the duty of the Brahmanas to behave like Agni. The Vedas are fire. They constitute my strength. I'm prepared therefore, to eat even this unclean food for appeasing my hunger.

yathā yathā vai jīveddhi tat kartavyam apīḍayā |  
jīvitam maraṇācchreya jīvan dharmam avāpnuyāt || 62 ||

That by which life may be preserved should certainly be accomplished without scruple. Life is better than death. Living, one may acquire merit through Dharma.

so'ham jīvitam ākāṅkṣan na bhakṣasyāpi bhakṣaṇam |  
vyavasye buddhi pūrvam vai tad bhavān anumanyatām || 63 ||

Therefore I am most solicitous of preserving my life, I desire, with the full exercise of my understanding, to eat this unclean food. Please give me your permission.

jīvan dharmam carisyāmi praṇotsyāmy-aśubhāni ca |  
tapobhir vidyayā caiva jyotīṁśīva mahat-tamaḥ || 64 ||

Continuing to live I shall pursue the acquisition of virtue and by penances and by knowledge I shall neutralize the negativity consequent on my present conduct, like the luminaries of the sky destroying even the thickest darkness."

śvapaca uvāca

naitat khādan prāpsyase prāṇam anyam, nāyurdīrgham nāmṛtasyeva tṛptim |  
bhikṣāmanyām bhikṣa mā te mano'stu, śvabhakṣaṇe śvā hyabhakṣo dvijānām || 65 ||

The Chandala said:— "By eating this food one (like you) cannot obtain long life. Nor can one (like you) obtain strength (from such food), nor even that gratification which ambrosia offers. Rather seek some other kind of alms. Don't even think about eating dog's meat. The dog is certainly an unclean food to the twice-born."<sup>26</sup>

viśvāmitra uvāca

na durbhikṣe sulabham māṁsam anyacchvapāka nānnaṁ na ca me'sti vittam |  
kṣudhārtaś cāham agatir nirāśaḥ śvamāmse cāsmiṁ śaḍrasān sādhu manye || 66 ||

<sup>25</sup> The practice of Indra is governance, protecting dependents and ensuring order and peace in the land. Agni is the messenger of the gods and like him the priests act as intermediaries between the gods and humans, Agni consumes whatever is offered; clean and unclean, and so Vishvamitra is saying that at this moment he is willing to adopt the all-consuming quality of Agni.

<sup>26</sup> *Dvijas* - twice-born — those who have been initiated into the gāyatri mantra.

Viswamitra said:– "Any other kind of meat is not to be easily had during a famine like this. Besides, O Chandala, I have no wealth (wherewith to buy such food). I am exceedingly hungry. I cannot move any longer. I am utterly hopeless. I imagine that all the six kinds of taste are to be found in that piece of dog's meat."

śvapaca uvāca

pañca pañcanakhā bhakṣyā brahma kṣatrasya vai dvija |  
yadi śāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ te mābhakṣye mānasaṁ kṛthāḥ || 67 ||

The Chandala said:– "Only the five kinds of five-clawed animals are clean food for Brahmanas and Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, as laid down in the scriptures<sup>27</sup>. Do not set your heart upon what is unclean (for you)."

viśvāmītra uvāca

agastyenāsuro jagdho vātāpiḥ kṣudhitena vai |  
ahamāpadgataḥ kṣubdho bhakṣayiṣye śva jāghanīm || 68 ||

Viswamitra said:– "The great *Rishi* Agastya, while hungry, ate up the *Asura* named Vātāpi<sup>28</sup>. I am fallen into distress and am exceedingly hungry. I shall therefore, eat that haunch of dog's meat.'

śvapaca uvāca

bhikṣāmanyāmāhareti na caitat kartum arhasi |  
na nūnaṁ kāryam etad vai hara kāmāṁ śvajāghanīm || 69 ||

The Chandala said:– "Rather try to obtain some other alms. It is not suitable for you to do this act — it is most inappropriate for you. If however, you really want it, you may take away this piece of dog's meat."

viśvāmītra uvāca

śiṣṭā vai kāraṇaṁ dharme tad vṛttam anuvartaye |  
parāṁ medhyāśanād etāṁ bhakṣyāṁ manye śvajāghanīm || 70 ||

Viswamitra said:– "The authorities in matters of Dharma are known as *śiṣṭas*<sup>29</sup>. I am following their example. I now regard this dog's haunch to be better food than anything that is highly pure."

<sup>27</sup> Animals with five claws are forbidden with the exception of the iguana, tortoise, porcupine, hedgehog, rhinoceros, and hare. (Manu 5:18; Apastamba 1:19:37; Vaishtha 14:39; Gautama 17)

<sup>28</sup> Ilvala and Vatapi were two Asuras who hated sages. They had a clever trick to kill the sages. They would go to the sages in mock humility and invite them to a meal. Vatapi would turn into a goat and his brother would kill the goat and cook it and then feed it to the Brahmin guest. Then after the meal, Ilvala would shout, "Vatapi, come out." Vatapi would become alive and rip open the stomach of the Brahmin and come out. One day Agastya came to visit them. They were very happy to see that a sage had come to them on his own, without being invited. They received Agastya with all honour and invited him to stay for lunch. Agastya happily finished his meal and said: "I had never eaten such a sumptuous meal. I have never seen such a dutiful host as you." So saying he rubbed his hand on his stomach and said, "I am satisfied, really satisfied. Vatapi, be digested" and belched. As usual Ilvala called out, "Vatapi, come out." But it was of no use. Vatapi had already been digested by Agastya.

<sup>29</sup> śruti smṛti vihito dharmah | tad alābhe śiṣṭācārah pramāṇam |  
śiṣṭaḥ punar-akāmātmā agrhyamāṇa kāraṇo dharmah || vasiṣṭha 1: 4-7

The law is set forth in the Vedas and the Smritis. When these do not address a specific issue, the practice of cultured people becomes authoritative. Now a cultured person is free from (personal) motives. For something to be the law, it must not have a tangible motive.

śvapaca uvāca

asatā yat samācīṇṇaṁ na sa dharmah sanātanaḥ |  
nāvṛttam anukāryaṁ vai mā calenānṛtaṁ kṛthāḥ || 71 ||

The Chandala said:– "That which an unrighteous person does can never be regarded as constituting *Sanātana Dharma* (The Eternal Right code of conduct). That which is an improper act can never be a proper one. Please don't commit a sinful act by deceit (don't kid yourself)."

viśvāmitra uvāca

na pātakam nāvamatam ṛṣiḥ sankartum arhasi |  
samau ca śva-mṛgau manye tasmād bhakṣyā śvajāghanī || 72 ||

Vishvāmitra said:– "A *Rishi* cannot possibly do what is sinful.<sup>30</sup> In the present case, deer and dog, I think are same (both being animals). I shall, therefore, eat this dog's haunch."

śvapaca uvāca

yad brāhmaṇārthe kṛtamarthitena, tenarṣiṇā tacca bhakṣyādhikāram |  
sa vai dharmo yatra na pāpam asti, sarvair upāyair hi sa rakṣitavyaḥ || 73 ||

The Chandala said:– "The *Rishi* (Agastya) did that act because he was solicited by the Brahmins. Under those particular circumstances it was not a sin. Dharma is those acts which are uncensurable. Besides, the Brahmins, who are the preceptors of three other orders, should be protected and preserved by every means."

viśvāmitra uvāca

mitraṁ ca me brāhmaṇaścāyamātmā, priyaśca me pūjyatamaśca loke |  
taṁ bhartu kāmō'ham imāṁ hariṣye, nṛśaṁsānām īdṛśānām na bibhye || 74 ||

Vishvāmitra said:– "I am a Brahmin and this my body is my friend. It is very dear to me and is worthy of the highest reverence from me. It is from the desire of sustaining the body that I wish to take away that dog's haunch. So eager have I become that I have no longer any fear of you and your fierce brethren."

śvapaca uvāca

kāmaṁ narā jīvitaṁ santyaajanti, na cābhakṣyaiḥ prati-kurvanti tatra |  
sarvān kāmān prāpnuvantīha vidvan priyasva kāmaṁ sahitaḥ kṣudhā vai || 75 ||

The Chandala said:– "Many people would rather die than eat food that is unclean. They obtain the fruition of all their wishes even in this world by conquering hunger. You too should strive to conquer your hunger and obtain those rewards."

viśvāmitra uvāca

sthāne tāvat saṁśayaḥ pretyabhāve, niḥsaṁśayaṁ karmaṇām vā vināśaḥ |  
ahaṁ punar varta ityāśayātmā, mūlaṁ rakṣaṇ bhakṣayiṣyāmy abhakṣyam || 76 ||  
buddhyātmake vyastamastīti tuṣṭo, mohād ekatvaṁ yathā carma cakṣuḥ |  
yady-apyenaḥ saṁśayād ācarāmi, nāhaṁ bhaviṣyāmi yathā tvam eva || 77 ||

Vishvāmitra said:– "As regards myself, I observe very strict vows and my mind is totally focused on peace. For preserving the very basis of all religious merit (the body), I shall eat food that is unclean. It is clear that such an act [of self preservation] would be regarded as righteous by any enlightened person. To an unenlightened person, the eating of dog's flesh would appear censurable. Even if the conclusion to which I have arrived

<sup>30</sup> Agastya was a *Rishi*. He could not do what was sinful by knowingly consuming a person.



be wrong, [and if I eat this dog's meat] I shall never, because of that, become one like you."

śvapaca uvāca

patanīyamidaṁ duḥkhamiti me vartate matiḥ |  
duṣkṛtī brāhmaṇaṁ santaṁ yastvām aham upālabhe || 78 ||

The Chandala said:– "It is my settled conclusion that I should try my best to restrain you from this transgression. By doing a wicked act, a Brahmin falls off from his high state. It is for this reason alone that I am reproving you."

viśvāmitra uvāca

pibanty-evodakaṁ gāvo maṇḍūkeṣu ruvatsvapi |  
na te'dhikāro dharme'sti mā bhūrātma-praśaṁsakaḥ || 79 ||

"Vishvamitra said:– "Cattle continue to drink, regardless of the croaking of the frogs. You can lay no claim whatsoever to what constitutes Dharma (and what not). Do not over estimate yourself!"

śvapaca uvāca

suhṛd bhūtvānuśāsmi tvā kṛpā hi tvayi me dvija |  
tad evaṁ śreya ādhatsva mā lobhācchvānamādithāḥ || 80 ||

"The Chandala said:– "I have become your friend. For this reason only I am preaching to you. Do what is beneficial to yourself and don't be tempted from greed to do what is sinful."

viśvāmitra uvāca

suhṛn me tvaṁ sukhepsuśced āpado mām samuddhara |  
jāne'haṁ dharmato'tmānaṁ śvānīm utsṛja jāghanīm || 81 ||

Vishvamitra said:– "If you are seriously a friend desirous of my happiness, then save me from this dire distress by relinquishing this dog's haunch, I may consider myself saved by the aid of Dharma (and not by that of sinfulness)."

śvapacha uvāca

naivotsahe bhavate dātu metām, nopekṣituṁ hriyamāṇaṁ svam annam |  
ubhau syāvaḥ svamalenāvaliptau, dātāhaṁ ca tvaṁ ca vipra pratīcchan || 82 ||

The Chandala said:– "I dare not make a present of this piece of meat to you, nor can I quietly allow you to rob me of my own food. If I give you this meat and if you take it, being a Brahmana, both of us will become liable to suffer in the next world."

viśvāmitra uvāca

adyāham etad vṛjinaṁ karma kṛtvā, jīvaṁś-cariṣyāmi mahā pavitram |  
prapūtātmā dharmam evābhipatsye, yad etayor guru tad vai bravīhi || 83 ||

Vishvamitra said:– "By committing this sinful act today I shall certainly save my life which is very sacred. Having saved my life, I shall afterwards practice virtue and purify myself. Tell me which of these two is preferable [to die of hunger, or save my life by taking this food that is unclean]."

śvapaca uvāca

ātmaiva sāksī kula dharma kṛtye, tvam eva jānāsi yad atra duṣkṛtam |  
yo hyādriyād bhakṣyam iti śva-māṁsaṁ, manye na tasyāsti vivarjanīyam || 84 ||

The Chandala said:– "In discharging the duties that appertain to one's family or vocation, one's own self is the best judge [of its propriety or impropriety]. You yourself

know which of those two acts is preferable. One who would regard dog's meat as acceptable food, I think, would in matters of food abstain from nothing else!"

viśvāmitra uvāca

upādāne khādane vāsya doṣaḥ, kāryātyaye nityam atrāpavādaḥ |  
yasmin himsā nānṛtam vākcyaleśo, 'bhakṣya kriyā yatra na tad garīyaḥ || 85 ||

Vishvamitra said:— "In accepting [an inappropriate gift] or in eating [unclean food] there is sin. When one's life, however, is in danger there is no sin in accepting such a gift or eating such food. Besides, the eating of unclean food, when it does not involve slaughter and deception and when the act itself will provoke only mild rebuke, is not a matter of much consequence."

śvapaca uvāca

yady-eṣa hetus tava khādan asya na te vedaḥ kāraṇaṁ nānyadharmāḥ |  
tasmād bhakṣye'bhakṣaṇe vā dvijendradoṣaṁ na paśyāmi yathed amatra || 86 ||

The Chandala said:— "If this be your reason for eating unclean food, it is then clear that you don't really care for the Veda and Arya morality. I understand by what you are going to do, O foremost of Brahmanas, that there is no sin in disregarding the distinction between clean and unclean food."

viśvāmitra uvāca

na pātaṁ bhakṣaṇam asya dṛṣṭaṁ surāṁ pītvā patatītiha śabdaḥ |  
anyonya karmāṇi tathā tathaiva na pāpa-mātreṇa kṛtaṁ hinasti || 87 ||

Vishvamitra said:— "A person doesn't incur a grave sin by eating (forbidden food), nor does one become fallen by drinking wine — this is only a cautionary precept (for restraining men from becoming drunkards). The other forbidden acts (of the same category), whatever they be, and in fact, every sin, cannot destroy one's merit."<sup>31</sup>

śvapaca uvāca

asthānato hīnataḥ kutsitādvā taṁ vidvāṁsaṁ bādhate sādhu-vṛttam |  
sthānaṁ punaryo labhate niṣaṅgāt tenāpi daṇḍaḥ sahitavya eva || 88 ||

The Chandala said:— "That learned person who takes away dog's meat from an unworthy place (like this), from an unclean wretch (like me), from one who (like me) leads such a wicked life, commits an act that is opposed to respectable behaviour. In consequence of this behavior one is certain to suffer the pangs of regret."

bhīṣma uvāca

evam uktvā nivavṛte mātāṅgaḥ kauśikaṁ tadā |  
viśvāmitro jahāraiva kṛtabuddhiḥ śvajāghanīm || 89 ||

Bhishma continued:— "The mātāṅga (chandala), having said these words to Vishvamitra, became silent. Vishvamitra of cultivated understanding, then took away that haunch of dog's meat.

tato jagrāha sa śvāṅgam jīvitārthī mahāmuniḥ |  
sadāras tām upāhṛtya vane bhoktum iyeṣa saḥ || 90 ||

The great ascetic having taking possession of that piece of dog's meat for saving his life, took it away into the woods with the intention of sharing it with his wife.

<sup>31</sup> na māṁsa bhakṣaṇe doṣo na madye na ca maithune | pravṛttir eṣā bhūtānāṁ nivṛttis-tu mahā phale || Manu 5.56. There is no sin in eating meat, in (drinking) spirituous liquor, and in carnal intercourse, for that is the natural way of created beings, but abstention brings great rewards.

athāsya buddhir bhavad vidhināham śvajāghanīm |  
bhakṣayāmi yathā kāmam pūrvam santarpya devatāḥ || 91 ||

He then resolved first to offer it to the deities according to the proper rites, and then afterwards to savour it with pleasure.

tato'gnim upasamhr̥tya brāhmaṇa vidhinā munih |  
endrāgneyena vidhinā carum śrapayat svayam || 92 ||

Kindling a fire according to the *Brahma* rites, the ascetic, who was well acquainted with those rites that go by the name of *Aindragneya*, began to cook that meat into sacrificial *Charu*.

tataḥ samārabhat karma daivam pitryam ca bhārata |  
āhūya devān indrādīn bhāgam bhāgam vidhi kramāt || 93 ||

He then began the ceremonies in honour of the gods and the *Pitris*, by dividing that *Charu* into as many portions as were necessary, according to the injunctions of the scriptures, and by invoking the gods with Indra at their head (for accepting their shares).

etasminn eva kāle tu pravavarṣa sa vāsavaḥ |  
sañjīvayan prajāḥ sarvā janayāmāsa cauṣadhīḥ || 94 ||

Meanwhile, Indra the king of the celestials began to shower the rain copiously. Reviving all creatures by those showers, he caused plants and herbs to grow once more.

viśvāmitro'pi bhagavāms tapasā dagdha kilbiṣaḥ |  
kālena mahatā siddhim avāpa paramādbhutām || 95 ||

The sage Vishvamitra, thus having fasted for such a long time and through his penances performed over many years acquired the most wonderful psychic powers.

sa samhr̥tya ca tat karma anakhādya ca taddhaviḥ |  
toṣayāmāsa devāmsca pitṛmsca dvija sattamaḥ || 96 ||

Having completed the ritual without partaking of the sacrificial remnants, the gods and pitris were greatly pleased with that sacrifice of Vishvamitra.

evam vidvān adīnātmā vyaśanastho jījīviṣuḥ |  
sarvopāyai rupāyajño dīnam ātmānam uddharet || 97 ||

Thus, when the end in view is the preservation of life itself, even then a scholar possessed of great learning and acquainted with the means to rescue himself, when fallen into distress, should strive in every possible way for self-preservation.

etām buddhim samāsthāya jīvitavyam sadā bhavet |  
jīvan puṇyam avāpnoti nara bhadraṇi paśyati || 98 ||

By having recourse to such understanding, one should always preserve one's life. A person, if alive, can win religious merit and enjoy happiness and prosperity.

tasmāt kaunteya viduṣā dharmādharma viniścaye |  
buddhimāsthāya loke'smin vartitavyam yatātmanā || 99 ||

For this reason, O son of Kunti, an enlightened person, possessed of learning should live and act in this world, relying upon his own intelligence in discriminating between righteousness and its opposite<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> *dūreṇa hyavaram karma buddhi-yogād dhanañjaya | buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ ||*

# DIALOGUE BETWEEN KING JANAKA & SULABHA

## Sulabhā Janaka Saṁvādaḥ

Shanti Parva 308

Women characters in the Mahābhārata are usually molded to suit patriarchal expectations, they also speak the language that suits patriarchy. Women are idealized as mothers, wives, daughters and daughters-in-law. So the existence of women is in relation to the men and they are generally devoid of an independent identity.

If a woman follows the patriarchal norms, she is respected, like Kunti is respected as mother and Draupadi as a wife. Amba dared to challenge the patriarchal norms by expressing her love for Shalva and her life was full of suffering. But there is no guarantee that submitting to the patriarchal norms will bring happiness. Draupadi, Kunti and Gandhari suffered throughout their lives.

This dialogue between Sulabha and Janaka is an example of the debate on women and gender in ancient Indian texts. Neither the popular nor the scholarly debate in modern India has paid sufficient attention to unmarried learned women in ancient Hindu texts. Sulabha, a single woman and a scholar-renunciant; engages in a debate with philosopher-king Janaka. When Janaka, seated in an assembly of learned male Brahmin scholars uses chauvanistic arguments to critique Sulabha's unconventional behavior, Sulabha successfully establishes, on the basis of Hindu philosophical principles, that there is no essential difference between a man and a woman; she also demonstrates by her own example that a woman may achieve liberation by the same means as a man.

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

aparityajya gārhaṣṭhyaṁ kuru-rājarṣisattama |  
kaḥ prāpto vinayaṁ buddhyā mokṣa tattvaṁ vadasva me || 1 ||  
saṁnyasyate yathātmāyaṁ saṁnyastātmā yathā ca yaḥ |  
paraṁ mokṣasya yaccāpi tan me brūhi pitāmaha || 2 ||

Yudhishtira said:— "O Bhīṣma! Who has attained Liberation, which is the control of the mind (and the other faculties) – without abandoning the householder life. Please tell me this! How the gross and the subtle bodies<sup>33</sup> should be understood and renounced? O grandsire, please also describe to me what the supreme excellence of Moksha<sup>34</sup> is."

bhīṣma uvāca

atrāpy udāharantūmam itihāsaṁ purāṇanam |  
janakasya ca saṁvādaṁ sulabhāyāśca bhārata || 3 ||

Bhishma said:— "In this connection there is an ancient anecdote of the conversation between King Janaka and Sulabha which can be cited."

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Action with attachment [to results] is far inferior, O Arjuna, to action done with equanimity. Seek refuge in your own intellect. Miserable are they, who act motivated by reward. (Gītā 2:49)

<sup>33</sup> An individual is comprised of 3 bodies (*śarīra*) 1. The physical body (*sthūla*), 2. The subtle body consisting of mind (*sūkṣma*) and 3. Causal body consisting of the seeds of previous karmic conditioning (*kāraṇa*).

<sup>34</sup> Mokṣa is liberation from the cycle of birth and death or complete liberation from attachment to the material world while living.

saṁnyāsa phalikaḥ kaścīd babhūva nṛpatiḥ purā |  
maithilo janako nāma dharma-dhvaja iti śrutaḥ || 4 ||

In the olden days there was a king of Mithila, by the name of Janaka popularly known as Dharma-dhwaja (Flag-of-dharma). He was devoted to the practice of Renunciation (*sanyāsa*).

sa vede mokṣa śāstre ca sve ca śāstre kṛtāgamaḥ |  
indriyāṇi samādhāya śaśāsa vasudhām imām || 5 ||

He was well conversant with the Vedas, and with the Scriptures dealing with Moksha, as well as with the Scriptures dealing with his own duty as a ruler. Subjugating his senses, he ruled this Earth.

tasya veda-vidaḥ prājñāḥ śrutvā tām sādhu-vṛttatām |  
lokeṣu sprhayanty-anye puruṣāḥ puruṣeśvara || 6 ||

Hearing of his far renowned good conduct, many wise and highly educated people, desired to emulate him.

atha dharma-yuge tasmin yoga dharmam anuṣṭhitā |  
mahīm anucāraikā sulabhā nāma bhikṣukī || 7 ||

At that time of great rectitude, there was a woman by the name of Sulabhā, who belonged to the mendicant order. Practicing the disciplines of Yoga she wandered about over the earth.

tayā jagad idaṁ sarvaṁ aṭantyā mithileśvaraḥ |  
tatra tatra śruto mokṣe kathyamānas tridaṇḍibhiḥ || 8 ||

In the course of her wanderings, Sulabha heard from many Brahmin mendicants (*daṇḍis*<sup>35</sup>) in various places, that the ruler of Mithila was devoted to the Dharma of Mokṣa.

sāti sūkṣmāṁ kathāṁ śrutvā tathyaṁ neti sasamśayā |  
darśane jāta saṅkalpā janakasya babhūva ha || 9 ||

Hearing this report about king Janaka and keen to ascertaining whether it was true or not, Sulabha decided to arrange a personal interview with Janaka in order to test him.

tatra sā viprahā yātha pūrva rūpaṁ hi yogataḥ |  
abibhradanavadyāṅgī rūpam anyad anuttamam || 10 ||

Through her Yogic powers Sulabha transformed herself into a beautiful woman, assuming the perfect figure of an unrivalled beauty<sup>36</sup>.

cakṣur nimeṣa mātrena laghvastra gati-gāminī |  
videhānāṁ purīm subhrūr jagāma kamalekṣaṇā || 11 ||  
sā prāpya mithilāṁ ramyāṁ samṛddha jana saṅkulām |  
bhaikṣacaryāpadeśena dadarśa mithileśvaram || 12 ||

In the twinkling of an eye and with the speed of the quickest arrow, the fair-browed lady with eyes like lotus petals arrived at Mithila, the populous capital of the Videhas<sup>37</sup>. Dressed as a mendicant (carrying the triple staff) she presented herself before the king.

<sup>35</sup> They are called *daṇḍi* or 'staff- bearers' because of the triple bamboo staff borne by them - representing subjugation of body, speech and mind.

<sup>36</sup> This shape-shifting act connects to the philosophical point she makes later, that all forms are transitory and apparent, not permanent or innate to the *ātman*.

rājā tasyāḥ param dr̥ṣṭvā saukumāryam vapus tathā |  
keyam kasya kuto veti babhūvāgata vismayaḥ || 13 ||

The monarch, seeing her gorgeous sexy form, was filled with amazement and wondered who she was, to whom she was attached, and from where she had come.

tato'syāḥ svāgataṁ kṛtvā vyādiśya ca varāsanam |  
pūjitām pāda-śaucena varānnenāpy-atarpayat || 14 ||

Welcoming her, he assigned her an excellent seat. He honoured her by offering water to wash her feet, and gratified her with excellent food and refreshments.

atha bhuktavatī prītā rājānam mantribhir vṛtam |  
sarva bhāṣya vidām madhye codayāmāsa bhikṣukī || 15 ||

Duly refreshed and gratified with the hospitality offered to her, Sulabha, who was surrounded by his ministers, and seated in the midst of learned scholars, resolved to ask him some questions.

sulabhā tvasya dharmeṣu mukto neti sasaṁśayā |  
sattvaṁ sattvena yogajñā praviveśa mahīpate || 16 ||

Doubting that Janaka was in fact a *jīvan-mukta*,<sup>38</sup> Sulabha, through her yogic powers then projected her mind into that of the king.

netrābhyām netrayorasya raśmīn saṁyojya raśmibhiḥ |  
sā sma saṁcodayiṣyantaṁ yoga bandhair babandha ha || 17 ||

Being very keen to question<sup>39</sup> the king. Rays from her eyes penetrated into the eyes of the king's and he became constrained by her Yogic powers.

janako'pyutsmayan rājā bhāvam asyā viśeṣayan |  
pratijagrāha bhāvena bhāvamasyā nṛpottamaḥ || 18 ||

That king of kings, understood the intentions of Sulabha, showing her respect and smiling and with his inner intuition connected with her intuition.

tad ekasmin nadhiṣṭhāne saṁvādaḥ śrūyatāmayaṁ |  
chatrādiṣu vimuktasya muktāyāśca tridaṇḍake || 19 ||

The king, in his subtle (astral) form, was without the royal umbrella and sceptre (symbols of his status) and Sulabha, in her subtle form, was also without her triple staff. Both thus remaining in the same (subtle) form, conversed with each other.

janaka uvāca

bhagavatyāḥ kva caryeyam kṛtā kva ca gamiṣyasi |  
kasya ca tvaṁ kuto veti papracchainām mahīpatiḥ || 20 ||

Janaka said:– “O venerable lady, from where have you received your initiation into Sanyāsa? To whom are you connected<sup>40</sup>? From where have you come here?

<sup>37</sup> *Vi-deha* literally means "without a body" and Sulabha assumes the king would be more interested in her mind than in her body!

<sup>38</sup> A *jīvan-mukta* is a person who has achieved Liberation mentally and spiritually but continues to live in a physical body which is the product of Karma. The existence of the body continuing till the Karma is exhausted.

<sup>39</sup> *Saṁcodayiṣyanti* implies questioned. Here it means questioning the king internally or by Yoga power.

<sup>40</sup> Janaka follows convention which defines a woman by her connection to a man.



śrute vayasi jātau ca sadbhāvo nādhigamyate |  
eṣvartheṣūttaraṁ tasmāt pravedyaṁ mat samāgame || 21 ||

No one can, without questioning, ascertain another's acquaintance with the Scriptures, or age, or social origin. You should, therefore, answer these questions of mine, because you have come to me.

chatrādiṣu viśeṣeṣu muktaṁ mām viddhi sarvaśaḥ |  
sa tvām saṁmantum iccāmi mānārhaṁ matā si me || 22 ||

I want you to know that I am truly free from all vain attachment to my royal umbrella and sceptre. I want you to know me as I really am. You are deserving I believe, of my respect.

yasmāccaitan mayā prāptaṁ jñānaṁ vaiśeṣikaṁ purā |  
yasya nānyaḥ pravaktāsti mokṣe tam api me śṛṇu || 23 ||

Listen to me as I speak to you on this specific knowledge (*vaiśeṣika*<sup>41</sup>) which I acquired in days of yore. I shall also inform you of my guru who was the only one who could transmit this specific knowledge.

pārāśara sagotrasya vṛddhasya sumahātmanaḥ |  
bhikṣoḥ pañcaśikhasyāhaṁ śiṣyaḥ parama saṁmataḥ || 24 ||

I am the beloved disciple of the exalted and venerable mendicant Pancha-shikha, belonging to Parasara's<sup>42</sup> clan.

sāṅkhya-jñāne tathā yoge mahīpāla vidhau tathā |  
trividhe mokṣa-dharme'smin gatādhvā chinna saṁśayaḥ || 25 ||

I have studied the Sankhya and the Yoga systems of philosophy as well as Politics (*Rāja-Dharma*), which constitute the three well-known paths of Liberation. I have resolved all my doubts in respect of these.

sa yathā śāstra dṛṣṭena mārgeṇa parivrajan |  
vārṣikāṁś caturō māsān purā mayi sukhoṣitaḥ || 26 ||

Wandering about and consistently pursuing the path that is taught by the Scriptures, the learned Pancha-shikha formerly dwelt happily in my abode for a period of four months in the rainy season.

tenāhaṁ sāṅkhya mukhyena sudṛṣṭārthena tattvataḥ |  
śrāvitā trividhaṁ mokṣaṁ na ca rājyād vicāliṭaḥ || 27 ||

That expert scholar of Sankhya lectured me on the several ways in which one can attain Liberation, convincingly and in an intelligible manner, which I could easily comprehend. He did not, however, instruct me to give up my kingdom.

so'haṁ tām akhilāṁ vṛttiṁ trividhāṁ mokṣa saṁhitām |  
mukta rāgaścārāmyekaḥ pade paramake sthitaḥ || 28 ||

<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to say in what sense the word distinguishing (*vaiśeṣika*) is used here. There is a particular system of philosophy called Vaiseshika; the system believed to have been originally promulgated by a Rishi of the name of Kanada. That system has close resemblance to the atomic theory of European philosophers. It has many points of striking resemblance with Kapila's system or Sankhya. Then, again, some of the original principles, as enunciated in the Sankhya system, are also called by the name of Viśeṣa.

<sup>42</sup> Parāśara was a maharishi and the author of many ancient texts. He is accredited as the author of the first Purana, the Vishnu Purana. He was the grandson of Vasishtha, the son of Śakti Maharṣi, and the father of Vyasa.

Thus I obtained the threefold knowledge pertaining to Moksha. Freed from attachments, and fixing my mind on the supreme Brahman, and in isolation, I practiced in its entirety that triple conduct which is laid down in treatises on Moksha.

vairāgyaṁ punar etasya mokṣasya paramo vidhiḥ |  
jñānād eva ca vairāgyaṁ jāyate yena mucyate || 29 ||

Dispassion (*vairāgya*) is the greatest means prescribed for *moksha*. It is from wisdom (*jñāna*) that dispassion (*vairāgya*) arises and through which one becomes liberated.

jñānena kurute yatnaṁ yatnena prāpyate mahat |  
mahad dvandva pramokṣāya sā siddhir yāvayotigā || 30 ||

From knowledge arises the motivation to practice; and through practice one attains Self-realisation. Through knowledge of Self one transcends joy and sorrow. And that enables one to transcend death and attain to the state of perfection.

seyaṁ paramikā buddhiḥ prāptā nirdvandvatā mayā |  
ihaiva gata mohena caratā mukta saṅginā || 31 ||

My ignorance has been dispelled, and accordingly I have transcended all pairs of opposites. Even though I live as a householder, I'm constantly mindful of non-duality.

yathā kṣetraṁ mṛdūbhūtam adbhīr āplāvitaṁ tathā |  
janayaty aṅkuraṁ karma ṇṇāṁ tadvat punarbhavam || 32 ||

As soil, saturated with water and softened thereby, causes the seed to sprout forth, in the same manner, one's acts (Karma) cause rebirth.

yathā cottāpitaṁ bījaṁ kapāle yatra tatra vā |  
prāpyāpyaṅkura hetutvam abījatvān na jāyate || 33 ||  
tadvad bhagavatānena śikhā proktena bhikṣuṇā |  
jñānaṁ kṛtam abījaṁ me viṣayeṣu na jāyate || 34 ||

As a potentially fertile seed, when cooked, becomes infertile: in the same manner my mind, having been freed from the productive principle of desire, through the instruction of the venerable Pancha-shikha, no longer produces its fruit in the form of attachment to the sense-objects.

nābhirajyati kasmimścin nānarthe na parigrahe |  
nābhirajyati caiteṣu vyarthatvād rāga roṣayoḥ || 35 ||

My mind is free from attachment to either misfortune or fortune. I never experience love for my spouse or hate for my enemies. Indeed, I am indifferent to both, realizing the pointlessness of attachment and anger.

yaśca me dakṣiṇaṁ bāhuṁ candanena samukṣayet |  
savyaṁ vāsyā ca yas takṣet samāvetāvubhau mama || 36 ||

I regard both the one that anoints my right hand with sandal-paste and one that wounds my left, with perfect equanimity.

sukhī so'ham avāptārthaḥ sama loṣṭāśma kāñcanaḥ |  
mukta saṅgaḥ sthito rājye viśiṣṭo'nyais tridaṇḍibhiḥ || 37 ||

Having attained my (true) goal in life, I am happy, and look equally upon a clod of earth, a rock, and a lump of gold. I am freed from every kind of attachment, even though engaged in ruling a kingdom. Consequently, my position is more distinguished than all you mendicants who bear the triple staff.

mokṣe hi trividhā niṣṭhā dṛṣṭā pūrvair maharṣibhiḥ |  
jñānaṁ lokottaraṁ yaccha sarva tyāgaśca karmaṇām || 38 ||

Some foremost scholars that are conversant with the topic of Moksha say that it has a triple path (viz. Jñāna Yoga, Karma Yoga, and Sanyāsa). Some consider wisdom regarding all things of the world to be the means of Liberation.

jñāna niṣṭhām vadantyeke mokṣa śāstra vido janāḥ |  
karma niṣṭhām tathaivānye yatayaḥ sūkṣma darśinaḥ || 39 ||

Some hold that the total renunciation of acts (both physical and mental) is the means thereof. Other scholars say that Wisdom (*Jñāna Yoga*) is the only means. Others, viz. Yatis, endued with subtle vision, are of the opinion that acts [done without a desire for their fruit] i.e. *Karma Yoga* constitute the means.

prahāyobhayam apyetajjñānaṁ karma ca kevalam |  
tṛtīyaṁ samākhyātā niṣṭhā tena mahātmanā || 40 ||

The exalted Pancha-shikha, rejecting both the paths of Wisdom (*jñāna Yoga*) and Works (*karma yoga*), regarded the third (*sanyāsa* - renunciation) to be the only means to Liberation.

yame ca niyame caiva dveṣe kāme parigrahe |  
māne dambhe tathā snehe sadṛśāste kuṭumbibhiḥ || 41 ||

If householders are endued with *yama*<sup>43</sup> and *niyama*<sup>44</sup>, they become equal to renunciates (Sannyāsins). If, on the other hand, Sannyāsins are endued with attraction (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*) and spouses and honour and pride and affection, they are equal to householders.

tridaṇḍādiṣu yadi asti mokṣo jñānena kenacit |  
chatrādiṣu katham na syāt tulya hetau parigrahe || 42 ||

If one can attain Moksha by means of knowledge, then Moksha may exist in triple staffs [for there is nothing to prevent the bearers of such a staff from acquiring the necessary knowledge]. Why then may Moksha not exist in the umbrella and the sceptre as well, especially, when there is equal reason in taking up the triple staff and the sceptre?

yena yena hi yasyārthaḥ kāraṇeneha kasyacit |  
tat tad ālambate sarvaḥ sve sve svārtha parigrahe || 43 ||

Whatever one needs to obtain specific goals for which one has particular need arising from some selfish motive, it is those objects that one utilizes to accomplish those very goals.

doṣa-darśī tu gārhaṣṭhye yo vrajaty-āśramāntaram |  
utsrjan parigrhṇaṁśca so'pi saṅgān na mucyate || 44 ||

If a person, realising the inherent faults in the vocation of a householder renounces it for adopting another vocation [such as sanyāsa which one considers to be of greater merit], one cannot be regarded as being free from all attachments, [for all that one has done has been to attach oneself to a new vocation after having relinquished one].

ādhipatye tathā tulye nigrāhānugrahātmani |  
rājarṣi bhikṣukācāryā mucyante kena hetunā || 45 ||

<sup>43</sup> *ahimsa-satya-asteya brahmacharya-aparigraha yama* — Yoga Sutras 2:30 yamas regulate one's behaviour with others: non-violence, truth, non-stealing, continence, non acceptance of favours.

<sup>44</sup> *śauca, santoṣa, tapaḥ, svādhyāye, īśvara-pranidhānāni* — *niyamāḥ* | Yoga Sutras 2:32 niyamas are internal regulations: hygiene, contentment, austerity, study, surrender to Isvara.

Sovereignty involves the rewarding and the chastising of others. The life of a mendicant equally involves the same [for mendicants also reward and chastise those they can]. When mendicants are therefore similar to kings in this respect, why should Liberation be the sole prerogative of mendicants and not rulers?

atha satyādhīpatye'pi jñānenaiveha kevalam |  
mucyante sarva pāpebhyo dehe paramake sthitāḥ || 46 ||

Notwithstanding the possession of sovereignty therefore, one becomes free from sins by means of wisdom/insight alone, while mindful of the Supreme Brahman.

kāśāya dhāraṇaṁ maṇḍyaṁ triviṣṭabdhāḥ kaṇḍaluḥ |  
liṅgāny atyartham etāni na mokṣāyeti me matiḥ || 47 ||

The wearing of saffron robes, shaving of the head, bearing of the triple staff, and the carrying of water pot (*Kamandalu*), — these are merely the outward signs of one's vocation. These have no value in aiding one in the attainment of Moksha.

yadi satyapi liṅge'smin jñānam evātra kāraṇam |  
nirmokṣāyeha duḥkhasya liṅga mātraṁ nirarthakam || 48 ||

When, in spite of the adoption of these vocational trappings, wisdom alone is the cause of one's freedom from suffering, it would appear that the adoption of mere emblems is perfectly useless.

atha vā duḥkha śaithilyaṁ vīkṣya liṅge kṛtā matiḥ |  
kiṁ tad evārtha sāmānyaṁ chatrādiṣu na lakṣyate || 49 ||

Or, if you have appropriated these emblems of Sannyāsa because you consider them to be aids in the mitigation of suffering, then why shouldn't the mitigation of suffering be recognised in the umbrella and the sceptre which I have appropriated?

ākīñcanye na mokṣo'sti kiñcanye nāsti bandhanam |  
kaiñcanye cetare caiva jantur jñānena mucyate || 50 ||

Freedom does not exist in poverty; nor is bondage to be found in affluence. One attains Freedom from suffering through wisdom alone, regardless of one's financial status.

tasmād dharmārtha kāmeṣu tathā rājya parigrahe |  
bandhan āyataneṣveṣu viddhya bandhe pade sthitam || 51 ||

For these reasons, I am living in a state of complete Freedom (*mokṣa*), although ostensibly engaged in the performance of right living (*dharma*), enjoyment of wealth (*artha*), and pleasure (*kāma*) and ruling a kingdom which constitute a field of bondage [for the generality of people].

rājyaiśvarya-mayaḥ pāśaḥ snehāyatana bandhanaḥ |  
mokṣāśmani śite neha chinnaś tyāgāsinā mayā || 52 ||

The bonds constituted by kingdom and affluence, and the bondage to attachments, I have cut off with the sword of Renunciation whetted on the stone of the Scriptures dealing with Moksha.

so'hamevaṅgato mukto jātāsthas tvayi bhikṣuki |  
ayathārtho hi te varṇo vakṣyāmi śṛṇu tan mama || 53 ||

In this way I am Liberated. O sannyasinī, I have developed an affection for you. But that should not prevent me from telling you that your behaviour does not accord with the practices of the vocation which you profess!

saukumāryaṁ tathā rūpaṁ vapur agryaṁ tathā vayaḥ |  
tavaitāni samastāni niyamaś ceti saṁśayaḥ || 54 ||

You're young, beautiful and have an exquisite body – these are a hindrance to Yoga, but in addition you appear to have mastered *Niyama* (subjugation of the senses); but I do seriously doubt it.<sup>45</sup>

yaccāpy-ananurūpaṁ te liṅgasyāsyā viceṣṭitam |  
mukto'yaṁ syān na vetyasmād dharṣito mat parigrahaḥ || 55 ||

You have restrained my body [by entering into me with the aid of the Yogic power] for ascertaining whether I am really liberated or not. This act of yours doesn't accord with that vocation whose emblems you bear.

na ca kāma samāyukte mukte'pyasti tridaṇḍakam |  
na rakṣyate tvayā cedān na muktasyāsti gopanaḥ || 56 ||

For a Yogini who possesses desire, the triple staff is inappropriate; so you have in fact disgraced your staff. As for those that are liberated, it is their duty to protect themselves from fall.

mat pakṣa saṁśrayāccāyaṁ śṛṇu yaste vyatikramaḥ |  
āśrayantyāḥ svabhāvena mama pūrva parigraham || 57 ||

I will now list your transgressions because of your contact with me, and your having entered into my physical body by your mind.

praveśaste kṛtaḥ kena mama rāṣṭre pure tathā |  
kasya vā saṁnisargāt tvaṁ praviṣṭā hṛdayaṁ mama || 58 ||

Why have you entered into my kingdom and my palace? Who has authorised you to enter into my mind?

varṇa pravara mukhyāsi brāhmaṇī kṣatriyo hyaham |  
nāvayor eka yogo'sti mā kṛthā varṇa-saṅkaram || 59 ||

You belong to the foremost of all the social orders, being, as you are, a Brahmana woman. I am a Kshatriya. There is no legal union for us two so you've contributed to the intermixture of social orders.

vartase mokṣa-dharmeṣu gārhashtye tvahamāśrame |  
ayaṁ cāpi sukaṣṭaste dvitīyo"śrama-saṅkaraḥ || 60 ||

You are engaged in the practice of Yoga which leads to Liberation. I live as a householder. This act of yours therefore, is wrong for it produces an incompatible conjunction of two antagonistic modes of life.

sagotrāṁ vāsagotrāṁ vā na veda tvāṁ na vettha mām |  
sagotram āviśantyāste tṛtīyo gotra-saṅkaraḥ || 61 ||

I do not know whether you belong to my own gotra (exogamous clan) or not and you do not know who I am (viz., to what gotra I belong). If you are of my own gotra, you have, by entering into my person, committed another transgression – the violation of forbidden union<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> She is beautiful, shapely and youthful, and Janaka therefore doubts that she has subdued her senses. The implication here is that a young and beautiful woman is incapable of overcoming her desires for sensual and sexual pleasure.

<sup>46</sup> According to the Dharma śāstras one cannot marry into the same clan (gotra)

atha jīvati te bhartā proṣito'pyatha vā kvacit |  
agamyā parabhāryeti caturtho dharma-saṅkaraḥ || 62 ||

If, again, your husband is alive and dwelling in a distant place, your illegal union with me has produced the fourth transgression of confusion of dharma (*dharma-saṅkara*), for as the wife of another you are not one with whom I may lawfully conjugate.

sā tvam etāny-akāryāṇi kāryāpekṣā vyavasyasi |  
avijñānena vā yuktā mithyājñānena vā punaḥ || 63 ||

Are you perpetrating all these violations through motivation to accomplish some particular purpose? Or are you acting from ignorance or from malice?

atha vāpi svatantrāsi svadoṣeṇa kenacit |  
yadi kiñcicchutam te'sti sarvaṁ kṛtam anarthakam || 64 ||

If, again, in consequence of your evil nature you have thus become thoroughly independent or totally unrestrained in your behaviour, I tell you that if you have any knowledge of the Scriptures, you will understand that everything you have done has been productive of evil.

idam anyat caturtham te bhāva sparśa vighātakam |  
duṣṭāyā lakṣyate liṅgaṁ pravaktavyaṁ prakāśitam || 65 ||

You're guilty of a fourth fault in consequence of these acts of yours, a fault that is destructive of peace of mind. By endeavouring to display your superiority you have proven yourself to be a wicked woman<sup>47</sup>.

na mayyevābhisandhiste jayaīṣṇyā jaye kṛtaḥ |  
yeyaṁ mat pariṣat kṛtsnā jetum icchasi tām api || 66 ||

Desirous as you are of asserting your victory, it is not me alone whom you wish to defeat, but obviously you wish to obtain a victory over my entire court (consisting of these learned and very superior Brahmanas).

tathār hatas tataśca tvaṁ dṛṣṭim svām pratimuñcasi |  
mat pakṣapratighātāya svapakṣodbhāvanāya ca || 67 ||

By glancing in this way repeatedly towards all these virtuous Brahmanas, it is evident that you desire to humiliate them all and glorify yourself [at their expense].

sā svenāmarṣajena tvamṛddhimohena mohitā |  
bhūyaḥ sṛjasi yogāstraṁ viṣāmr̥tam ivaikadhā || 68 ||

Stupefied by pride in your Yogic achievements that has arisen from jealousy [at the sight of *my* power] you have caused a union of your mind with mine and thereby have really mingled nectar with poison.

icchatoratra yo lābhaḥ strī puṁsor amṛtopamaḥ |  
alābhaścāpyaraktasya so'tra doṣo viṣopamaḥ || 69 ||

The union of men and women who mutually desire each other is full of joy and as sweet as nectar. When a lusty woman unites with a man who does not lust after her, instead of being a virtue, is a fault that is as noxious as poison.

mā sprākṣīḥ sadhu jānīṣva svaśāstram anupālaya |  
kṛteyaṁ hi vijijñāsā mukto neti tvayā mama ||  
etat sarvaṁ praticchannaṁ mayi nārhasi gūhitum || 70 ||

<sup>47</sup> The implication is that she is a wicked woman because she's trying to display her superiority over men.



Do not continue to touch me! Know that I am virtuous! Act according to your own Scriptures (*sannyāsa-dharma*). The enquiry you wished to make, viz., whether I am or I am not Liberated, is over. Now you should reveal to me all your secret motives.

sā yadi tvaṁ svakāryeṇa yadi anyasya mahīpateḥ |  
tat tvaṁ satra praticchannā mayi nārhasi gūhitum || 71 ||

It is not appropriate that you disguise yourself, and conceal your objective from me, i.e. whether this visit of yours has been prompted by the desire of accomplishing some personal objective or for accomplishing the objective of some other king [that is hostile to me]<sup>48</sup>.

na rājānaṁ mṛṣā gacchen na dvijātiṁ kathaṁcana |  
na striyaṁ strīguṇopetāṁ hanyurhyete mṛṣāgatāḥ || 72 ||

One should never appear in disguise before a king, nor before a Brahmana, nor before a married woman who is possessed of every wifely virtue. Those who appear in deceitful guise before these three very soon meet with destruction.

rājñāṁ hi balam aiśvaryaṁ brahma brahma-vidāṁ balam |  
rūpa yauvana saubhāgyaṁ strīṇāṁ balam anuttamam || 73 ||

The power of kings consists in their sovereignty. The power of Brahmanas conversant with the Vedas is in knowledge. Women wield even greater power in consequence of their beauty, youth and good fortune.

ata etair balair eve balinaḥ svārtham icchatā |  
ārjavenābhigantavyā vināśāya hyanārjavam || 74 ||

Therefore, one who is desirous of success should always approach these three with sincerity and candour, insincerity and deceit fail to produce success [in these three areas i.e. politicians, priests and women].

sā tvaṁ jātiṁ śrutaṁ vṛttaṁ bhāvaṁ prakṛtiṁ ātmanaḥ |  
kṛtyam āgamane caiva vaktum arhasi tattvataḥ || 75 ||

It is befitting therefore, that you now inform me of the social order into which you were born, of your learning, conduct, disposition and nature, as also of the purpose of your visit to this place!"

bhīṣma uvāca

ityetair asukhair vākyair ayuktair asamañjasaiḥ |  
pratyādiṣṭā narendreṇa sulabhā na vyakampata || 76 ||

Bhishma continued:– "Though rebuked by the king in these insulting, improper, and inappropriate words, the lady Sulabha was not at all abashed.

ukta vākye tu nṛpatau sulabhā cārudaśanā |  
tataś cārutaraṁ vākyam pracakrāmātha bhāṣitum || 77 ||

After the king had spoken, the beautiful Sulabha then began her sweet and eloquent reply."

Sulabha uvāca

navabhir navabhiścaiva doṣair vāg buddhi dūṣaṇaiḥ |  
apetam upapannārtham aṣṭādaśa guṇānvitam || 78 ||

<sup>48</sup> This speculation indicates that he is unable to conceive of an autonomous female agent and so thinks she must be merely an instrument, acting at the behest of a male.

saukṣmyaṁ saṅkhyākramau cobhau nirṇayaḥ saprayojanaḥ |  
pañcāitānyartha jātāni vākyaṁ ityucyate nrpa || 79 ||

Sulabha said:– "O king, speech and intellect ought always to be free from the nine verbal faults and the nine judgmental faults. It should also, while communicating the meaning with clarity, be possessed of the eighteen well known merits.

Ambiguity<sup>49</sup>, ascertainment of the faults and merits of premises and conclusions, weighing the relative strength or weakness of those faults and merits, establishing of a conclusion, and the element of persuasiveness<sup>50</sup> that attaches to the conclusion thus arrived at – these five characteristics<sup>51</sup> appertaining to the meaning constitute the authoritativeness of what is said.

eṣāṁ ekaikaśo'rthānāṁ sauṣmyādīnāṁ sulakṣaṇam |  
śṛṇu saṁsāryamāṇānāṁ padārthaiḥ pada-vākyaṭaḥ || 80 ||  
jñānaṁ jñeyeṣu bhinneṣu yathābhedenā vartate |  
tatratīśayinī buddhis tat sauṣmyam iti vartate || 81 ||

Listen to the characteristics of these requirements beginning with ambiguity, one after another, as I expound them according to the context. When the objects under investigation are different from one another, true knowledge will depend upon the distinction between them, and when there are many points to take into consideration then the problem of ambiguity arises.

doṣānāṁ ca guṇānāṁ ca pramāṇaṁ pravibhāgaśaḥ |  
kañcid artham abhipretya sā saṅkhyety upadhāryatām || 82 ||  
idaṁ pūrvam idaṁ paścād vaktavyaṁ yad vivakṣitam |  
krama yogaṁ tam apyāhur vākyaṁ vākya vido jānāḥ || 83 ||

*Saṅkhyā* is a method of critical investigation through elimination of faults or merits (in premises and conclusions), by adopting provisional meanings. *Krama* – is the weighing of relative strengths or weakness of the faults or merits (ascertained by the afore mentioned process). It consists in deciding the correctness of the placement of the words employed in a sentence as regards their priority or posteriority. This is the view of persons conversant with the interpretation of sentences or texts.

dharmārtha kāma mokṣeṣu pratijñāya viśeṣataḥ |  
idaṁ tad iti vākyaṁte procyate sa vinirṇayaḥ || 84 ||

<sup>49</sup> *Saukṣmyam*, is literally subtlety. It means ambiguity here. These verses are extremely terse. For bringing out the meaning of the verse, the following illustration may serve. A sentence is composed containing some words each of which is employed in diverse senses, as the well-known verse of Parasara which has been interpreted to sanction the remarriage of Hindu widows. Here, the objects indicated by the words used are varied. Definite knowledge of the meaning of each word is arrived at by means of distinctions. i.e., by distinguishing each meaning from every other. In such cases, the understanding before arriving at the definite meaning, rests in succession upon diverse points, now upon one, now upon another. Indeed, the true meaning is to be arrived at in such cases by a process of elimination. When such processes become necessary and in seizing the sense of any sentence, the fault is said to be the fault of subtlety or ambiguity.

<sup>50</sup> By *prayojanam* is meant the conduct one pursues for gratifying one's wish to acquire or avoid any object. Desire, in respect of either acquisition or avoidance, if ungratified, becomes a source of pain. The measures that one adopts for removing that pain is called *Prayojanam*.

<sup>51</sup> By occurrence of these five characteristics together is meant that when there are properly attended to by a speaker or writer, only then can his sentence be said to be complete and intelligible. In Nyāya philosophy, the five requisites are *Pratijñā* – premise, *Hetu* – cause, *Udahāraṇa* – example, *Upanaya* – application of example and *Nirṇaya* – conclusion. In the Mimamsa philosophy, the five requisites have been named differently. *Viśaya* – sentence under discussion, *Samśaya* – doubt, *Pūrva-pakṣa* – the oppositor's view, *Uttara-pakṣa* – the proposed view and *Nirṇaya* – settled conclusion.

By 'conclusion' (*nirṇaya*) is meant the final determination, after considering everything specific that has been said on the subjects of right living (*dharma*), pleasure (*kāma*), wealth (*artha*), and Liberation (*mokṣa*).

icchā dveṣa bhavair duḥkhaiḥ prakarṣo yatra jāyate |  
tatra yā nṛpate vṛttis tat prayojanam iṣyate || 85 ||

Suffering arises O King, through attraction (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*). The course of action that one takes in such matters [for dispelling the sorrow experienced] is called *Prayojanam*.

tānyetāni yathoktāni sauḥkṣmyādīni janādhipa |  
ekārtha samavetāni vākyam mama niśāmaya || 86 ||

Take my word for it O king, that these characteristics of Ambiguity and the other (numbering five in all), when occurring together, constitute a complete and intelligible sentence.

upetārtham abhinnārtham nāpavṛttam na cādhikam |  
nāślakṣṇam na ca sandigdham vakṣyāmi paramam tava || 87 ||  
na gurvakṣara sambaddham parāṇmukha mukham na ca |  
nānṛtaṁ na trivargeṇa viruddham nāpy-asamskṛtam || 88 ||  
na nyūnam kaṣṭha śabdam vā vyutkramābhīhitam na ca |  
na śeṣam nānukalpena niṣkāraṇam ahetukam || 89 ||

My discourse will be meaningful, free from ambiguity, logical, free from verbosity or tautology, smooth, clear, free from haranguing, agreeable, truthful, not inconsistent with the three human pursuits (viz., *Dharma* – Morality, *Artha* – Wealth and *Kāma* – Pleasure), refined, direct, free from harshness or difficulty of comprehension, systematic, based upon common-sense, connected with one another as cause and effect and each having a specific object.

kāmāt krodhād bhayāl lobhād dainyād ānārya kāttathā |  
hrīto'nukrośato mātānna vakṣyāmi kathaṁcana || 90 ||

Nothing that I shall say to you is motivated by either desire, anger, fear, greed, desire to debase you, deceit, shame, compassion or pride. [I answer you because it is proper for me to give a rejoinder to what you have said].

vaktā śrotā ca vākyam ca yadā tvavikalam nṛpa |  
samameti vivakṣāyām tadā so'rthaḥ prakāśate || 91 ||

True meaningful communication occurs only when the speaker, the listener, and the words spoken thoroughly agree with one another.

vaktavye tu yadā vaktā śrotāram avamanyate |  
svārthamāha parārtham vā tadā vākyam na rohati || 92 ||

In trying to communicate, when a speaker shows disregard for the comprehension of the hearer by using words whose meaning he alone understands, then, however appropriate those words may be, they become incapable of communicating a message.

atha yaḥ svārtham utsṛjya parārtham prāha mānavaḥ |  
viśaṅkā jāyate tasmin vākyam tad api doṣavat || 93 ||

One who, abandoning all regard for personal meaning, uses words that are of excellent sound and sense, but engenders only erroneous impressions in the mind of the hearer is also a bad communicator.

yastu vaktā dvayor artham aviruddham prabhāṣate |  
śrotuścaivātmanaścaiva sa vaktā netaro nṛpa || 94 ||

The orator, however, who employs words that, while expressing the intended meaning, are also intelligible to the hearer, truly deserves to be called a communicator. No one else deserves the name.

tad arthavad idaṁ vākyam upetaṁ vākya sampadā |  
avikṣiptamanā rājann ekāgraḥ śrotum arhasi || 95 ||

Therefore, O king, you should listen with focussed attention to these words of mine, which are grammatically and syntactically correct and profoundly meaningful.

kāsi kasya kuto veti tvayāham abhicoditā |  
tatrottaram idaṁ vākyaṁ rājann ekamanāḥ śṛṇu || 96 ||

You have asked me who I am, to whom I belong, where I am coming from, etc. Listen to me, O king, with undivided attention, as I answer these questions of yours.

yathā jatu ca kāṣṭhaṁ ca pāṁsavaś codabindubhiḥ |  
suśliṣṭāni tathā rājan prāṇinām iha sambhavaḥ || 97 ||

As resin and wood, as grains of dust and drops of water, exist commingled when brought together, even so are the existences of all creatures.

śabdaḥ sparśo raso rūpaṁ gandhaḥ pañcendriyāṇi ca |  
prthagātmā daśātmānaḥ saṁśliṣṭā jatu-kāṣṭhavat |  
na caiśaṁ codanā kācid astītyeṣa viniścayaḥ || 98 ||

Sound, touch, taste, form, and scent and the senses related to them, though separate from the Self (*ātman*), yet exist in a state of commingling like resin and wood. It is again well known that nobody asks any of these, saying, who are you?

ekaikasyeha vijñānaṁ nāstyātmani tathā pare |  
na veda cakṣuś-cakṣuṣṭvaṁ śrotraṁ nātmani vartate || 99 ||

Each of them also has no knowledge either of itself or of the others. The eye cannot see itself. The ear cannot hear itself.

tathaiva vyabhicāreṇa na vartante parasparam |  
saṁśliṣṭā nābhijāyante yathāpa iha pāṁsavaḥ || 100 ||

The senses and their objects although mingling together do not know each other – just as dust and water mingled together cannot know each other though existing in a state of union.

bāhyānanyān-apekṣante guṇāṁs-tān-api me śṛṇu |  
rūpaṁ cakṣuḥ prakāśaśca darśane hetavastrayaḥ || 101 ||

In order to discharge their respective functions, they need the contact of objects that are external to them. The eye, form and light, constitute the three requisites of the operation called seeing.

yathaivātra tathānyeṣu jñānajñeyeṣu hetavaḥ || 102 ||  
jñānajñeyāntare tasmin mano nāmāparo guṇaḥ |  
vicārayati yenāyaṁ niścaye sādhasādhunī || 103 ||

Exactly the same happens in respect of the operations of the other senses and their targets. Then in addition to the functions of the senses (called vision, hearing, etc.) and their targets (viz., form, sound; etc.), there is the mind which is different than the senses

and is regarded to have an function of its own. With its help one distinguishes between the existent and the non existent for discerning [in the matter of all data derived from the senses].

dvādaśas tvaparastatra buddhir nāma guṇaḥ smṛtaḥ |  
yena saṁśaya pūrveṣu boddhavyeṣu vyavasyati || 104 ||

Together with the five senses of knowledge and five senses of action, the mind (*manas*) makes a total of eleven. The twelfth is the intellect (*buddhi*). When doubt arises regarding something to be known, the intellect comes forward and settles all doubts.

atha dvādaśake tasmin sattvaṁ nāmāparo guṇaḥ |  
mahāsattvo'lpasattvo vā jantur yenānumīyate || 105 ||

After the twelfth, *sattva-guṇa* is another principle numbering the thirteenth. All beings are judged according to its predominance in their constitutions.

aham karteti cāpyanyo guṇastatra caturdaśaḥ |  
mamāyami yenāyaṁ manyate na ca manyate || 106 ||

After this, *ahaṁkāra* (the sense of self) is another principle (numbering the fourteenth). Its function is to develop an apprehension of Self as the actor, distinguished from what is not self.

atha pañcadaśo rājan guṇas tatrāparaḥ smṛtaḥ |  
pṛthak kalā samūhasya sāmāgryaṁ tad ihocyate || 107 ||  
guṇastv evāparas tatra saṅghāta iti ṣoḍaśaḥ |

*Vāsanā*<sup>52</sup> is the fifteenth principle, O king. This forms the nexus of everything and the totality of all these principles is the sixteenth known as nescience or *Avidyā*<sup>53</sup>.

prakṛtir vyaktir ityetau guṇau yasmin samāśritau || 108 ||  
sukha duḥkhe jarā mṛtyū lābhālābhau priyāpriye |  
iti caikonaviṁśo'yaṁ dvandva yoga iti smṛtaḥ || 109 ||

Unto it inhere the seventeenth and the eighteenth principles called *Prakṛiti* (*Māyā*<sup>54</sup>) and *Vyakti* [*puruṣa* or individual modes of consciousness]. Happiness and sorrow, decrepitude and death, acquisition and loss, the agreeable and the disagreeable these constitute the nineteenth principle and are called the 'pairs of opposites'.

ūrdhvaṁ ekona viṁśatyāḥ kālo nāmāparo guṇaḥ |  
itīmaṁ viddhi viṁśatyā bhūtānāṁ prabhavāpyayam || 110 ||

Beyond the nineteenth principle is another, viz., Time (*kāla*) called the twentieth. The births and deaths of all creatures are due to the action of this twentieth principle.

viṁśakaścaiṣa saṅghāto mahā-bhūtāni pañca ca |  
sad asad bhāva yogau ca guṇāvanyau prakāśakau || 111 ||

These twenty exist together. Besides these, the five Great Primal Elements, and existence and non-existence, bring up the total to twenty-seven.

ityevaṁ viṁśatiścaiva guṇāḥ sapta ca ye smṛtāḥ |  
vidhiḥ śukraṁ balaṁ ceti traya ete guṇāḥ pare || 112 ||

<sup>52</sup> All positive and negative experiences leave "impressions" on the mind known as *saṁskāras* the group of *saṁskāras* create a habitual pattern (*vāsanā*) which then constitute one's personality.

<sup>53</sup> *Avidyā* is the subjective but erroneous perception that the body is the real self rather than a vehicle.

<sup>54</sup> *Māyā* is the concept that the objective world is ultimately real and substantive.

Beyond these, are three others; namely *vidhi* (the seed of saṁskāras), *śukra* (the activation of saṁskāras) and *bala* (the fulfilling of activated saṁskāras), that make the tally reach thirty.

vimśatir-daśa caiva saṁkhyānataḥ smṛtāḥ |  
samagrā yatra vartante taccharīram iti smṛtam || 113 ||

That in which these ten and twenty principles occur and operate is said to be the physical body.

avyaktaṁ prakṛtiṁ tvāsāṁ kalānāṁ kaścid icchati |  
vyaktaṁ cāsāṁ tathaivānyaḥ sthūladarśī prapaśyati || 114 ||

Some persons regard unmanifest Prakriti to be the source or cause of these thirty principles. (This is the view of the atheistic Sankhya school). The Kanadas of gross vision regard the Manifest (or atoms) to be their cause.

avyaktaṁ yadi vā vyaktaṁ dvayīmatha catuṣṭayīm |  
prakṛtiṁ sarva bhūtānāṁ paśyanty-adhyātma cintakāḥ || 115 ||

Whether the Unmanifest or the Manifest is their cause, or whether the two (viz., the Supreme or Purusha and the Manifest or atoms) be, regarded as their cause, or fourthly, whether the four together (viz., *Purusha*, the Supreme, his *Māya* and *Jīva* and *Avidya* or Ignorance) are the causes, the spiritual philosophers all agree that Nature (*Prakriti*) and the atoms are the cause of all creatures.

yeyam prakṛtir avyaktā kalābhir vyaktatām gatā |  
aham ca tvam ca rājendra ye cāpyanye śarīriṇaḥ || 116 ||

That Prakriti which is unmanifest, becomes manifest in the form of these principles. Myself, yourself, O monarch, and all others that are embodied are the result of that Prakriti [so far as our bodies are concerned].

binduny āsādayo'vasthāḥ śukra-śoṇita sambhavāḥ |  
yāsām eva nipātena kalalaṁ nāma jāyate || 117 ||

Gestation and other (embryonic) phases begin with the meeting of the sperm and ovum because of insemination — the first embryonic stage is called '*Kalala*.'

kalalād arbudotpattiḥ peśī cāpyarbudodbhavā |  
peśyāstvaṅgābhi nirvṛttir nakha romāṇi cāṅgataḥ || 118 ||  
sampūrṇe navame māse jantor jātasya maithila |  
jāyate nāma rūpatvaṁ strī pumānveti līngataḥ || 119 ||

The next stage of gestation is called *budbuda* (4 weeks) followed by what is called *peshi*— (7 weeks) the stage in which the various limbs become manifested. From this last condition appear nails and hair. Upon the expiration of the ninth month the foetus takes its birth and it comes to be called a boy or girl as the sex may be.

jātamātraṁ tu tad rūpaṁ dr̥ṣṭvā tāmra nakhāṅguli |  
kaumāra rūpaṁ āpannaṁ rūpato nopalabhyate || 120 ||  
kaumārad yauvanaṁ cāpi sthāviryaṁ cāpi yauvanāt |  
anena krama yogena pūrvaṁ pūrvaṁ na labhyate || 121 ||

When the baby emerges from the womb, its nails and fingers seem to be of the hue of burnished copper. The next developmental stage is infancy, and the form gradually changes. From infancy it progresses to youth, then maturity and finally old age. As the person advances from one developmental stage into another, the form presented in the previous stage undergoes transformation.



kalānām prthag arthānām pratibhedah kṣaṇe kṣaṇe |  
vartate sarva bhūteṣu saukṣmyāt tu na vibhāvyaṭe || 122 ||

The constituent elements of the body, which serve diverse functions in the general physiology, undergo change every moment in every creature. These changes, however, are so minute that they cannot be noticed.

na caiṣāmapyayo rājanāllakṣyate prabhavo na ca |  
avasthāyām avasthāyām dīpasye vārciṣo gatiḥ || 123 ||

The birth of cells, and their death, in each successive condition, cannot be observed, O king, even as one cannot mark the changes in the flame of a burning lamp.

tasyāpyevam prabhāvasya sad aśvasyeva dhāvataḥ |  
ajasraṁ sarva lokasya kaḥ kuto vā na vā kutaḥ || 124 ||  
kasyedaṁ kasya vā nedaṁ kuto vedaṁ na vā kutaḥ |  
sambandhaḥ ko'sti bhūtānām svair apy avayavair iha || 125 ||

When such is the state of the bodies of all creatures, when the bodies are changing incessantly even like the rapid movement of a good race-horse – who then has come from where or not, or to whom some one belongs or not, or from where does one arise or not arise? What connection actually exists between creatures and their own bodies?

yathādityān maṇeścaiva vīrudbhyaścaiva pāvakaḥ |  
bhavaty evaṁ samudayāt kalānām api jantavaḥ || 126 ||

As from the contact between the rays of the sun and a magnifying glass, or from two pieces of wood when rubbed together, fire is generated, even so beings are generated from the combination of the (thirty) principles already named.

ātmany evātmanātmānam yathā tvam anupaśyasi |  
evam evātman ātmānam anyasmin kiṁ na paśyasi || 127 ||

Indeed, as you yourself see your own Self in your body by your self. Why is it that you do not see your own body and your own Self in the bodies and Selves of others?

yady ātmani parasmimśca samatā madhya vasyasi || 128 ||  
atha mām kāsi kasyeti kim artham anupṛcchasi |  
idaṁ me syād idaṁ neti dvandvair muktasya maithila || 129 ||  
kāsi kasya kuto veti vacane kiṁ prayojanam || 130 ||

If you do actually see an identity with yourself and others, why then did you ask me who I am and to whom do I belong? If it is true that you have, O king been liberated from duality that (erroneously) claims – this is mine and this other is not mine – then what use is there of such questions as "Who are you?", "Whose are you?" And "Whence do you come?"<sup>55</sup>

ripau mitre'tha madhyasthe vijaye sandhi-vigrahe |  
kṛtavānyo mahīpāla kiṁ tasmin mukta lakṣaṇam || 131 ||

<sup>55</sup> What Sulabha says here is this:– the great primary elements are the same whether they make up this body or any other body; and then it is the same consciousness (*cit*) that pervades every combination of the great elements. The object of this observation is to show that Janaka should not have asked these questions about Sulabha, he and she being essentially of the same essence. To regard the two as different would indicate obscuration of vision.

How can one know that the king is Liberated who acts just as others act towards enemies and allies and neutrals and in victory and truce and war?<sup>56</sup>

trivarge saptadhā vyaktam yo na vedeha karmasu |  
saṅgavānyas tri-varge ca kiṁ tasmin mukta lakṣaṇam || 132 ||

What are the indications of Liberation in one who does not know the true nature of the three goals (*dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*) as manifested in seven ways<sup>57</sup> in all acts and who, on that account, is attached to that aggregate of three?

priye caivāpriye caiva durbale balavatyapi |  
yasya nāsti samam cakṣuḥ kiṁ tasmin mukta lakṣaṇam || 133 ||

What indications of Liberation can there be in one who fails to look with an equal eye on the agreeable, on the weak, and the strong?

tad ayuktasya te mokṣe yo'bhimāno bhaven nṛpa |  
suhṛdbhiḥ sa nivāryaste vicittasyeva bheṣajaiḥ || 134 ||

In reality you have not achieved the acme of Yoga and your pretence of being enlightened should be discredited by your counsellors! Your endeavour to achieve Liberation [when you have so many faults] is like the use of medicine by a patient who indulges in all kinds of forbidden food and practices.

tāni tāny tu sañcintya saṅgasthānāny arindama |  
ātmanā'tmani sampaśyet kiṁ tasmin mukta lakṣaṇam || 135 ||

Reflecting upon all those sources of attachment with which one is involved, one should realise one's own Self. What else can be seen as an indication of enlightenment?

imāny anyāni sūkṣmāni mokṣam āśritya kānicit |  
caturaṅga pravṛttāni saṅgasthānāni me śṛṇu || 136 ||

Listen now to me as I expand in detail on these and certain other minute sources of attachment appertaining to the four well known acts [of sleep, enjoyment, eating, and dressing] to which you are still bound though you profess yourself to have adopted the Dharma of Liberation.

ya imāṁ pṛthivīm kṛtsnām eka chatrām praśāsti ha |  
ekameva sa vai rājā pura madhyāvasat yuta || 137 ||

That one who needs to rule the whole world must, indeed, be a single ruler without a second. He is obliged to live in only a single city.

tat pure caikamevāsya gṛham yad adhiṣṭhati |  
gṛhe śayanam apyekaṁ niśāyāṁ yatra līyate || 138 ||

In that city he has only one palace in which he has only one sleeping chamber. In that chamber he has only one bed on which at night he lies upon.

<sup>56</sup> The indication of an enlightened being is equal vision in terms of male & female, friends & enemies, weak & strong etc.

<sup>57</sup> The seven ways are as follows:— Righteousness, Wealth and Pleasure independently and distinct from one another count three, then the first and second, the first and third, and second and third, count three and lastly, all three existing together. In all acts, one or other of these seven may be found. The first and second exist in all acts whose result is the righteous acquisition of wealth; the first and third exist in the procreation of children in lawful wedlock; the second and third in ordinary acts of worldly men. Of acts in which all three combine, the rearing of children may be noticed, for it is at once a duty, a source of wealth, and a pleasure.

śayyārdham tasya cāpyatra strīpūrvamadhitiṣṭhati |  
tadanena prasaṅgena phalenaiveha yuhyate || 139 ||

Half that bed he is obliged to share with his wife. This may serve as an example of how little the king's share is of all that he is said to own.

evam evopabhogeṣu bhojanāc cādaneṣu ca |  
guṇeṣu parimeyeṣu nigrāhānugrahau prati || 140 ||

This is the case with all objects of enjoyment, and with the food he eats, and with the clothes he wears. He is thus attached to a very limited share of all things. He is again, involved in the duties of rewarding and punishing.

para-tantraḥ sadā rājā svalpe so'pi prasajjate |  
sandhi vigraha yoge ca kuto rājñāḥ svatantratā || 114 ||

The king is always dependent on others. He enjoys a very small share of all he is supposed to own, and to that too he's attached [just as others are attached to their respective possessions]. In the matter also of peace and war, the king is not independent.

strīṣu krīḍā vihāreṣu nityam asyāsvatantratā |  
mantra cāmātya samitau kuta eva svatantratā || 142 ||

In the matter of women, of sports and other kinds of enjoyment, the king's inclinations are exceedingly circumscribed. In the matter of taking counsel and in the senate what independence can the monarch be said to have?

yadā tvājñāpayat yanyāms tadāsyoktā svatantratā |  
avaśaḥ kāryate tatra tasmims tasmin guṇe sthitaḥ || 143 ||

When, indeed, he issues decrees, he is said to be thoroughly independent. But then a few moments later, his counsellors will advise him to change or modify his orders.

svaptu kāmo na labhate svaptuṁ kāryārthibhir janaiḥ |  
śayane cāpyanuññātaḥ supta utthāpyate'vaśaḥ || 144 ||

If the monarch desires to sleep, he cannot gratify his desire, resisted by those who have business to transact with him. He must sleep only when permitted, and must arise whenever an emergency arises to which he must attend.

abhigamyābhigamyainam yācante satatam narāḥ |  
na cāpyutsahate dātum vittarakṣī mahājanāt || 145 ||

Petitioners come in batches to the king and solicit him for funding. Being however, the custodian of the public treasury, he cannot freely give funding to those causes which he thinks are the most deserving.

dāne kośakṣayo hyasya vairam cāpyaprayacchataḥ |  
kṣaṇenāsyopavartante doṣā vairāgya kārakāḥ || 146 ||

If he funds his pet causes, the treasury becomes exhausted. If he does not, disappointed lobbyists look upon him with hostility. He becomes vexed and as the result of this, he becomes disenchanted with politics.

prājñān sūrāms tathaivādhyān ekasthāne'pi śaṅkate |  
bhayam apyabhaye rājño yaiśca nityam upāsyate || 147 ||

If many clever, powerful and wealthy men associate together, the king becomes exceedingly distrustful. Even when there is no cause of fear, the king entertains fear of those other politicians that always wait upon him.

tathā caite pradūṣyanti rājanye kīrtitā mayā |  
tathaivāśya bhayaṁ tebhyo jāyate paśya yādṛśam || 148 ||

Those I have mentioned O king, the courtiers and counsellors also find fault with him. I'll tell you in what way the king's fears may arise from even them!

sarvaḥ sve sve gr̥he rājā sarvaḥ sve sve gr̥he gr̥hī |  
nigrahānugrahau kurvaṁs tulyo janaka rājabhiḥ || 149 ||

All men are actually like petty kings in their own houses. All men, in their own houses are masters of their householder. Like kings, they control, chastise and reward [their family members].

putrā dārās tathaivātmā kośo mitrāṇi sañcayaḥ |  
paraiḥ sādharmaṇā hyete tais tairevāśya hetubhiḥ || 150 ||

Like kings, others also have children, spouses and friends/allies and stores. In respect of these the king is not different from all others.

hato deśaḥ puram dagdham pradhānaḥ kuñjaro mṛtaḥ |  
loka sādharmaṇeṣveṣu mithyājñānena tapyate || 151 ||

If the country is ruined, the city consumed by fire – the foremost of elephants is dead, at all this the king yields to grief like others. He takes these tragedies personally although these impressions are all due to ignorance and error.

amukto mānasair duḥkhair icchādveṣa priyod bhavaiḥ |  
śīro rogādibhī rogaḥ tathaiva vinipātibhiḥ || 152 ||

The king is seldom freed from mental grief caused by attachment, aversion and anxiety. He is also afflicted by headaches and other kinds of health issues like everyone else.

dvaṁdvais tais tair upahataḥ sarvataḥ pariśaṅkitaḥ |  
bahu pratyarthikaṁ rājyam upāste gaṇayan niśāḥ || 153 ||

The monarch is afflicted (like others) by all pairs of opposites (as pleasure and pain, etc). He is paranoid at everything. Indeed, full of adversaries and impediments as a state is, the monarch, while he enjoys it, passes nights sleeplessly.

tad alpa sukham atyartham bahu duḥkham asāravat |  
tṛṇāgni jvalana prakhyam phena budbuda sanibham |  
ko rājyam abhipadyeta prāpya copaśamaṁ labhet || 154 ||

Sovereignty, therefore, is blessed with an exceedingly small amount of happiness. The misery with which it is endued is very great. It is as unsubstantial as a fire fed by straw or the bubbles of froth on the surface of water. Who would like to obtain sovereignty, or having acquired sovereignty, who can hope for tranquillity?

mam edam iti yacedaṁ puram rāṣṭram ca manyase |  
balaṁ kośam amātyāṁśca kasyaitāni na vā nr̥pa || 155 ||

You regard this land and this palace as yours. You think also that this army, this treasury, and these counsellors all belong to you. Whose, however, in reality are they, and whose are they not?

mitrāmātyaṁ puram rāṣṭram daṇḍaḥ kośo mahīpatiḥ |  
saptāṅgasyāśya rājyasya tridaṇḍasyeva tiṣṭhataḥ ||  
anyonyaguṇayuktasya kaḥ kena guṇato'dhikaḥ || 156 ||

Allies, ministers, capital, provinces, judiciary, treasury, and the king, these seven constitute the limbs of a kingdom. Like the three staffs in my hand they are under your control. Both my staffs and your 7-limbed state have excellent virtues. Which of them can be said to be superior?

teṣu teṣu hi kāleṣu tat tad aṅgaṁ viśiṣyate |  
yena yat sidhyate kāryaṁ tat prādhānyāya kalpate || 157 ||

At certain times one or other of these limbs may be regarded as more important than the rest when some desirable end is served through their agency. Superiority, for the time being, is an evaluation of the one whose efficacy is thus seen.

saptāṅgaścāpi saṅghātastrayaścānye nṛpottama |  
sambhūya daśavargo'yaṁ bhuṅkte rājyaṁ hi rājavat || 158 ||

The seven limbs already mentioned and the three others<sup>58</sup>, forming an aggregate of ten, are mutually constitutive and supportive. They are said to enjoy the kingdom like the king himself.

yaśca rājā mahotsāhaḥ kṣatra dharma-rato bhavet |  
sa tuṣyed daśa bhāgena tatas tvanyo daśāvaraiḥ || 159 ||

That energetic king who is dedicated to Kshatriya principles [and wishes to rule fairly], should be satisfied with taxing a tenth part of the product of his subjects. Other kings are seen to be satisfied with less than a tenth part of such produce.

nāstyasādhāraṇo rājā nāsti rājyaṁ arājakaṁ |  
rājye'sati kuto dharmo dharme'sati kutaḥ param || 160 ||

If there were not a populace there would be no leader, and there is no kingdom without a king. If there be no kingdom, there can be no Dharma, and without Dharma, how can there be spiritual elevation?

sāham etāni karmāṇi rājya duḥkhāni maithila |  
samarthā śataśo vaktum atha vāpi sahasraśaḥ || 161 ||

But how many kings are there that rule their kingdoms well? I can mention hundreds and thousands of faults like these that attach to principalities and politicians.

svadehe nābhiṣaṅgo me kutaḥ para parigrahe |  
na mām evaṁ vidhān muktām īdrśaṁ vaktum arhasi || 162 ||

I have no attachment whatsoever to my body, so how then can I be said to have any connection with the bodies of others? You can not thus falsely charge me with having deviated from my renunciate vows.

nanu nāma tvayā mokṣaḥ kṛtsnaḥ pañcaśikhācchrutaḥ |  
sopāyaḥ sopaniṣadaḥ sopāsaṅgaḥ saniścayaḥ || 163 ||

Have you heard the Dharma of Liberation in its entirety from Panchasikha together with its means (*upāya*, *nididhyāsana*), its methods (*śravaṇa*, *manana*), its practices (*yama*, *niyama* and *yogangas*), and its conclusion (union of *jīvātma* and *paramātma*)<sup>59</sup>?

<sup>58</sup> Some commentators suggest that the three are:— *Vṛiddhi* (growth/expansion), *Kṣaya* (downsizing) and *Sthāna* (stabilization) which depend on policy. Others suggest that they are:— *prabhu-śakti* (the legislative power), *utsāha-śakti* (the power of systematic application) and *mantra-śakti* (edictal power)

<sup>59</sup> *Upāya* or 'means' implies here the attitude of sitting in meditation (as in Yoga). *Upaṇiṣad* or 'method' implies *śravaṇa* and *manana* i.e., listening and deep thinking. *Upasaṅga* or 'practices' imply the several

tasya te mukta saṅgasya pāsān ākramya tiṣṭhataḥ |  
chatrādiṣu viśeṣeṣu katham saṅgaḥ punar nṛpa || 164 ||

If you have overcome all your conditioning and freed yourself from all attachments, may I ask you, O king, why do you continue to nurture your attachments still with this royal umbrella and these other appendages of royalty?<sup>60</sup>

śrutam te na śrutam manye mithyā vāpi śrutam śrutam |  
atha vā śruta saṅkāśam śrutam anyacchrutam tvayā || 165 ||

In my view you may have heard but not *listened* well to the Scriptures [taught by Pañcaśikha], or, you may have listened to them but distorted their teaching, or, perhaps you have listened to some other treatises appearing like the Scriptures.

athāpīmāsu sañjñāsu laukikīṣu pratiṣṭhasi |  
abhiśaṅgāvarodhābhyām baddhas tvam prākṛto mayā || 166 ||

It seems that you are possessed only of worldly knowledge, and that like an ordinary man of the world you are bound by attachment to sense-objects and spouses and mansions and the like.

sattvenānupraveśo hi yo'yaṁ tvayi kṛto mayā |  
kiṁ tavāpakṛtaṁ tatra yadi mukto'si sarvataḥ || 167 ||

If it is true that you have been liberated from all attachments, what harm have I done you by entering your person with only my intellect?

niyamo hyeṣa dharmeṣu yatīnām śūnya-vāsitā |  
śūnyam āvāsyaṁtyā ca mayā kiṁ kasya dūṣitam || 168 ||

Among all the four social orders the custom of monastics (Yatis) is to dwell in uninhabited or deserted abodes. What harm then have I done to you by entering your [supposedly] empty body and mind?

na pāṇibhyām na bāhubhyām pādorubhyām na cānagha |  
na gātrāvayavair anyaiḥ sprśāmi tvā narādhipa || 169 ||

I have not touched you, with my hands, or arms, or feet, or thighs, O sinless one, or with any other part of my physical body.

kule mahati jātena hrīmatā dīrgha-darśinā |  
naitat sadasi vaktavyam sad vāsadvā mithaḥ kṛtam || 170 ||

You are born in an illustrious clan. You have modesty. You have foresight. Whether the act can be considered as good or bad, my entrance into your body has been a private one, concerning us two only. Was it proper for you to publish that private act before all your entire court?<sup>61</sup>

brāhmaṇā guravaśceme tathāmātyā gurūttamāḥ |  
tvam cātha gurur apyeṣām evam anyonya gauravam || 171 ||

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limbs of yoga leading to *Dhyana*, meditation. etc. *Niścaya* or conclusion has reference to unification with Brahman.

<sup>60</sup> The object of this verse is to show that as Janaka rules his kingdom in a disinterested and detached manner, he cannot lay claim to the merit that belongs to kings - i.e. who rule with a passion.

<sup>61</sup> The intellectual communion between them was a private matter and by making it public and describing it in sexual terms, he has disrespected himself, her, and his courtiers.



These Brahmins are all worthy of respect. They are foremost among preceptors. You also are entitled to their respect, being their king. Revering them, you are entitled to receive reverence from them.

tad evam anusandrīśya vācyāvācyaṁ parīkṣatā |  
strī-puṁsoḥ samavāyo'yaṁ tvayā vācya na saṁsadi || 172 ||

Reflecting on all this, it was not proper for you to proclaim before these foremost of men the fact of this conjugation between two persons of opposite sexes, if, indeed, you are really acquainted with the rules of propriety in respect of media.

yathā puṣkara paṇasthaṁ jalaṁ tat paṇa saṁsthitam |  
tiṣṭhaty asprśatī tadvat tvayi vatsyāmi maithila || 173 ||

O king of Mithila, I am present within you without touching you at all, even like a drop of water on a lotus leaf that stays on it without drenching it in the least.

yadi vāpy asprśantyā me sparśaṁ jñāsi kañcana |  
jñānaṁ kṛtam abījaṁ te kathaṁ teneha bhikṣuṇā || 174 ||

If you are experiencing my touch without any touch occurring, then I say you have failed to realise the teaching of Panchasikha — like an unproductive seed.

sa gārhashtyācchyutaśca tvaṁ mokṣaṁ nāvāpya durvidam |  
ubhayaḥ antarāle ca vartase mokṣa vātikaḥ || 175 ||

You have, it is clear, fallen from the domestic mode of life [by having connection with me] but you have not yet attained Liberation that is so difficult to attain. You hang between the two, pretending that you have reached the goal of Liberation.

na hi muktasya muktena jñasyaikatvapṛthak tvayoḥ |  
bhāvābhāva samāyoge jāyate varṇa saṅkaraḥ || 176 ||

The contact of one *jīvan-mukta* (one liberated while living) with another *jīvan-mukta*, or Purusha (Spirit) with Prakriti (Matter), cannot lead to an intermingling of the kind you dread.

varṇāśram apṛthaktve ca drṣṭārthasyāpṛthaktvinaḥ |  
nānyadanyaditi jñātvā nānyad anyat pravartate || 177 ||

Only those that regard the Self to be identical with the body, and that think the several orders and modes of life to be really different from one another, are open to the error of supposing a social intermingling to be possible. My body is different from yours. But my Self is not different from your Self.

pāṇau kuṇḍaṁ tathā kuṇḍe payaḥ payasi makṣikāḥ |  
āśritāśraya yogena pṛthaktvenāśrayā vāyam || 178 ||

A bowl is in the hand. In the bowl is milk. In the milk is a fly. Though the hand and bowl, and milk and the fly, all exist together, yet are they are distinct from each other.

na tu kuṇḍe payobhāvaḥ payaścāpi na makṣikāḥ |  
svayam evāśrayantyetē bhāvā na tu parāśrayam || 179 ||

The bowl does not partake of the nature of the milk. Nor does the milk partake of the nature of the fly. The condition of each is independent and can never be altered by the condition of the other with which it may be temporarily associated.

pṛthaktvād āśramāṇāṁ ca varṇānyatve tathaiva ca |  
paraspara pṛthaktvāc-ca kathaṁ te varṇa-saṅkaraḥ || 180 ||

Likewise, caste and vocations, though they may still pertain to a person that is Liberated, they do not really attach to him. How then can an intermingling of castes be possible in consequence of this union of myself with you?

nāsmi varṇottamā jātyā na vaiśyā nāvarā tathā |  
tava rājansavarṇāsmi śuddhayoniraviplutā || 181 ||

Then, again, O king, I am not a Brahmani by caste. Nor am I a Vaishya, nor a Sudra. I am like you a Kshatriya<sup>62</sup>, borne of a pure lineage and living a life of unbroken celibacy.

pradhāno nāma rājarṣir vyaktam te śrotram āgataḥ |  
kule tasya samutpannām sulabhām nāma viddhi mām || 182 ||

There was a royal sage of the name of Pradhāna. You've most probably heard of him. I am born in his lineage, and my name is Sulabha.

sāham tasmin kule jātā bhartary asati mad vidhe |  
vinītā mokṣa dharmeṣu carāmyekā munivratam || 183 ||

Being born in such a lineage, it was realised that no suitable husband could be found for me. I was then instructed in the Dharma of Liberation, I wander over the Earth alone, observing ascetic practices.

nāsmi satra praticchannā na para svābhimāninī |  
na dharma saṅkarakarī svadharme'smi dhṛtavratā || 184 ||

I practise no hypocrisy in the matter of Renunciation. I am not a thief that appropriates what belongs to others. My intention is not to disrupt the customs of the different social orders. I am consistent in the practice of *brahmacarya* pertaining to that mode of life to which I properly belong.

nāsthirā svapratijñāyām nāsamīkṣya pravādinī |  
nāsamīkṣyāgatā cāham tvat sakāśam janādhipa || 185 ||

I am firm and steadfast in my vows. I never utter any word without reflecting on its propriety. I did not come to you, without having fully deliberated properly, O monarch!

mokṣe te bhāvitām buddhiṁ śrutvāham kuśalaiṣiṇī |  
tava mokṣasya cāpyasya jijñāsārtham ihāgatā || 186 ||

Having heard that you are fully established in the Dharma of Liberation, I came here desiring to gain something. Indeed, it was for enquiring of you about Liberation that I had come.

na vargasthā bravīmy etat svapakṣa parapakṣayoḥ |  
mukto na mucyate yaśca śānto yaśca na śāmyati || 187 ||

I don't say it for glorifying myself and humiliating my opponents. But I say it, impelled by sincerity only. One that is emancipated never indulges in intellectual sparring for the sake of victory. One, on the other hand, who is really enlightened is devoted to Brahman, that sole ground of tranquillity.

yathā śūnye purāgāre bhikṣur ekām niśām vaset |  
tathā hi tvaccharīre'smin nimām vatsyāmi śarvarīm || 188 ||

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<sup>62</sup> Once again, Janaka has betrayed his prejudiced assumptions by assuming that all ascetics are Brahmins or that only a Brahmin can be an ascetic.

As a mendicant resides for only one night in an empty house [and leaves it the next morning], even thus I shall reside for this one night in your person [which, as I have already said, is like an empty chamber, being destitute of knowledge!].

sāham āsanadānena vāgātithyena cārcitā |  
suptā suśaraṇā prītā śvo gamiṣyāmi maithila || 189 ||

You have honoured me as a guest as is appropriate, with both conversation and other offerings. Having slept this one night in your person, O ruler of Mithila, which is as it were my own chamber now, tomorrow I shall depart.

ityetāni sa vākyaṇi hetum antyarthavanti ca |  
śrutvā nādhijagau rājā kiñcid anyadataḥ param || 190 ||

Hearing these this speech characterised by excellent sense and with sound reason, king Janaka failed to return any answer thereto.

### Summary of Sulabha's Argument

Sulabha's argument is grounded in basic Hindu philosophical premises, with which few orthodox Hindus would disagree, and this is its strength. Her primary arguments may be summarized thus:

1. The body is gendered but the ātman (universal Self) is not gendered.
2. The body acquires its gender at a certain stage in the womb, and the body changes constantly, so even the body is not always gendered in the same way, that is, even bodily gender is not a fixed or static thing.
3. The ātman is one and the same in all beings, regardless of the body's gender.
4. The ātman is neither the property of anyone nor under the control of anyone, and the Atman does not really act.

Following from these philosophical premises are her important secondary arguments that have practical implications for women's social status:

1. Since the same ātman animates both women and men, women are capable of pursuing the same paths as men.
2. A truly wise person, who has realized the oneness of the ātman, will not try to judge anyone, including any woman, by caste or marital status.
3. The ātman is not the property of anyone, so a truly wise person realizes that to ask a woman to whom she belongs is meaningless.
4. Since the ātman is one, intellectual or spiritual communion/union between any two persons, including a man and a woman, is not the same as physical union, and is not wrong.

## CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE HOUSEWIFE AND THE BRAHMIN

Vana Parva - chapter 209

This is an example of the ideal patriarchal wife – one who is devoted entirely to her husband and serves him as a god to the exclusion of all else. Be that as it may, the interesting thing about this conversation is the power that the woman has and her candidness in challenging the learned Brahmin and lecturing him on the ideal qualities of a Brahmin. So while reinforcing traditional domestic values it also empowers women to speak out.

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

kaścid dvijāti pravaro vedādhyāyī tapodhanaḥ |  
tapasvī dharma śīlaśca kauśiko nāma bhārata || 1 ||

Markandeya said:– "There was, once a virtuous ascetic by the name of Kaushika who had spent many years in spiritual practice and was devoted to the study of the Vedas.

sāṅgopaniṣadān vedān adhīte dvijasattamaḥ |  
savṛkṣa mūle kasminścid vedānuccārayan sthitaḥ || 2 ||

He was an exemplary Brahmin and had completed the study of all the *Vedas* with the *Angas* and the *Upanishadas*. One day he was reciting the *Vedas* at the foot of a tree.

upariṣṭāccha vṛkṣasya balākā samnyalīyata |  
tayā purīśam utsṛṣṭaṁ brāhmaṇasya tadopari || 3 ||

At the same time there sat on the top of that tree a female crane, and she just happened to shit on the Brahmin while he was chanting the Vedas.

samavekṣyatataḥ kruddhaḥ samam adhyāyata dvijaḥ |  
tām balakām mahārāja nilīnām naga mūrdhani || 4 ||

The Brahmin was enraged and immediately thought of injuring her as he cast an angry glance upon her.

bhr̥ṣaṁ krodhābhibhūtena balākā sā nirīkṣitā |  
apadhyātā ca vipreṇa nyapatad dharaṇītale || 5 ||

Seeing the furious gaze of the Brahmin, the crane became terrified and fell unconscious from the tree, and lay dead upon the ground.

balākām patitām dr̥ṣṭvā gata satvām acetanām |  
kāruṇyād abhisam̐taptāḥ paryaśocata tām dvijaḥ |  
akāryaṁ kṛtavān asmi dveśa rāga balāt kṛtaḥ || 6 ||

The Brahmin was much moved by remorse at his reaction and pity for the dead crane saying, 'Alas, I have done a regrettable deed, urged by anger and malice!'

ityuktāva bahuśo vidvān grāmaṁ bhaikṣāya sam̐sr̥itaḥ |  
grāme śucīni pracarankulāni bharatarśabha || 7 ||

Having repeatedly chastised himself, that learned Brahmin went to the village on a begging round among the houses of the elite. He approached one such house which he had visited before.

dehīti yācamāno'sau tiṣṭhety uktaḥ striyā tataḥ |  
śaucam tu yāvat kurute bhājanasya kuṭumbivī || 8 ||

At the gate of the house he said, '*Give me alms*'. And he was answered by a woman with the word, '*wait*' — she was engaged in cleaning the vessel from which alms are given.

etasmin antare rājan kṣudhā saṁpīḍito bhr̥ṣam |  
bhartā praviṣṭaḥ sahasā tasyā bharata-sattama || 9 ||

At that very moment her husband, suddenly returned home, tired and very much afflicted with hunger.

sā tu dr̥ṣṭvā patiṁ sādhvī brāhmaṇam vyapahāya tam |  
pādyamāchamanīyam vai dadau bhartustathā'sanam || 10 ||  
prahvā paryacaraccāpi bhartāram asitekṣaṇā |  
āhāreṇātha bhakṣyaiśca vākyaiḥ sumadhurais tathā || 11 ||

The virtuous housewife upon seeing her husband momentarily forgot the waiting Brahmin, and attended to her husband, bringing water to wash his feet and face and also a seat and after that served him delicious food and drink, patiently standing beside him to care for his wants.

ucchiṣṭam bhāvitā bhartur bhuṅkte nityam yudhiṣṭhira |  
daivatam ca patiṁ mene bhartuścittānusāriṇī || 12 ||

And that good wife used every day to eat the leftovers of her husband's meal, deeply in love with him and considering him to be her Lord.

karmaṇā manasā vācā nātyaśnānnāpi cāpivat |  
tam sarva bhāvopagatā pati śuśrūṣaṇe ratā || 13 ||

With her actions, mind and speech dedicated to the service of her husband. With her total being she was focused on his service.

sādhvācārā śucir-dakṣā kuṭumbasya hitaiśiṇī |  
bhartuścāpi hitam yat tat satatam sā'nuvartate || 14 ||

That virtuous wife was assiduously attentative to cleanliness and skilful, dedicated to the nurturing of her family, and an asset to her husband.

devatātithi bhr̥tyānām śvaśrūśvaśurayos tathā |  
śuśrūṣaṇaparā nityam satatam saṁyatendriyā || 15 ||

Being self-controlled and disciplined, she regularly attended to the worship of the gods and the reception of guests and to the care of her servants and the service of her in-laws.

sā brāhmaṇam tadā dr̥ṣṭvā saṁsthitam bhaikṣa-kāṅkṣiṇam |  
kurvatī pati-śuśrūṣām sasmārātha śubhekṣaṇā || 16 ||

And while that beautiful woman was still engaged in waiting upon her husband, she noticed that Brahmin still waiting for alms and she remembered that she had asked him to wait.

vr̥ḍitā sā'bhavat sādhvī tadā bharata sattama |  
bhikṣām ādāya viprāya nirjagāma yaśasvinī || 17 ||

And recalling this, she felt abashed, and immediately took alms and went out to present it to that Brahmin.

brāhmaṇa uvāca

kim idaṁ bhavati tvaṁ mām tiṣṭhety uktvā varāṅgane |  
uparodhaṁ kṛtavatī na visarjitavatyaṁ || 18 ||

The Brahmin said:– 'O best of women, O blessed one<sup>63</sup>, I am surprised at your conduct! If you were going to take such a long time why did you requested me to wait instead of politely dismissing me?'

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

brāhmaṇaṁ krodha saṁtaptaṁ jvalantaṁ iva tejasā |  
dṛṣṭvā sādhvī manuśyendra sāntvapūrvāṁ vaco'bravīt || 19 ||

Markandeya continued:– Seeing that Brahmin filled with anger and blazing with his spiritual energy, that chaste woman began to conciliate him and said;

stryuvāca

kṣantumarhasi me vidvaṁ bhartā me daivataṁ mahat |  
sa cāpi kṣudhitaḥ śrāntaḥ prāptaḥ śuśrūṣitomayā || 21 ||

The woman said:– "O learned one, you ought to forgive me. My husband is my supreme deity. He came home hungry and tired and I was busy serving and waiting upon him.

brāhmaṇa uvāca

brāhmaṇa na garīyāṁso garīyāṁste patiḥ kṛtaḥ |  
gṛhastha dharme vartantī brāhmaṇāṁ avamanyase || 22 ||

The Brahmin said:– What! Are Brahmins not worthy of the highest respect? Do you exalt your husband above them? You are following the Dharma of a householder and yet you disrespect Brahmins!

indro'pyeśāṁ praṇamate kiṁ punarmānava bhuvi |  
avalipte na jānīṣe vṛddhānāṁ na śrutaṁ tvayā || 23 ||

Indra himself bows down to Brahmins, what should be said of humans. Arrogant woman! have you never heard about the power of Brahmins? Have you never paid attention to what your elders say?

brāhmaṇā hyagnisadrṣā daheyuḥ pṛthivīmapi |  
saparvata vana dvīpāṁ kṣipram evāvamānitāḥ || 24 ||

The Brahmins are like fire and when disrespected have the power to destroy the entire earth along with its mountains, forests, continents!

stryuvāca

nāhaṁ balākā vipraśe tyaja krodhaṁ tapodhana |  
anayā kruddhayā dṛṣṭyā kruddhaḥ kiṁ mām kariśyasi || 25 ||

The woman answered:– "I am no she-crane, O Rishi! O you that are endued with the wealth of spiritual practice, get over this rage of yours! What can your angry glances do to me?

nāvajānāmyahaṁ vipraṁ devais tulyāṁ manasvinaḥ |  
aparādham imaṁ vipra kṣantum arhasi me'nagha || 26 ||

I do not disrespect Brahmins. Intelligent and learned Brahmins are like the gods themselves. But, O faultless one, this offence of mine you ought to forgive.

<sup>63</sup> The Brahmin is being sarcastic by using these apparent words of praise.



jānāmi tejo viprāṇāṁ mahābhāgyaṁ ca dhīmatām |  
apeyaḥ sāgaraḥ krodhāt kṛto hi lavaṇodakaḥ || 27 ||

I know the energy and majesty of wise Brahmins. The waters of the ocean have been made brackish and undrinkable by the anger of the Brahmins<sup>64</sup>.

tathaiva dīpta tapasām munīnām bhāvitātmanām |  
yeśām krodhāgnir adyāpi daṇḍake nopaśāmyati |  
kastān paribhaven mūḍho brāhmaṇān amitaujaṣaḥ || 28 ||

I know also the energy of self-controlled and disciplined *Munis* endowed with blazing ascetic merit. The fire of their anger to this day has not been extinguished in the forest of Dandaka.

brāhmaṇānām paribhavād vātāpiḥ sudurātmavān |  
agastyam ṛṣimāsādyā jīrṇaḥ krūro mahāsuraḥ || 29 ||

It was for his having contempt for the Brahmins that the great *Asura* — the wicked and evil-minded Vatapi was digested when he came in contact with Agastya.

bahu-prabhāvāḥ śrūyante brāhmaṇānām mahātmanām |  
krodhaḥ suvipulo brahman prasādaśca mahātmanām |  
asmiṁstv atikrame brahman kṣantum arhasi me'nagha || 30 ||

There are many narratives told about the immense influence and great merits of learned Brahmins. But, those wise Brahmins are great both in anger and in compassion. In whatever way I have disrespected you I ask for your forgiveness.

pati-śūsṛṣayā dharmo ya sa me rocate dvija |  
daivateśvapi sarveṣu bhartā me daivataṁ param || 31 ||

O best of Brahmins, whatever Dharma (merit) is involved in the service of my husband — that alone is dear to my heart, for I regard my husband as the highest among all the gods.

aviśeṣeṇa tasyāhaṁ kuryām dharmam dvijottama |  
śūsṛṣāyāḥ phalaṁ paśya patyurbrahmaṇa yādṛśam || 32 ||

I practise that virtue which consists in serving my husband whom I regard as the highest Deity. Now take note of the merit that arises from this service!

balākā hi tvayā dagdhā rośāt tad veditam mayā |  
krodhaḥ śatruḥ śarīrastho manuśyāṇām dvijottama || 33 ||

I know that you have burnt to death a she-crane with your anger! But, know that in the bodies of human beings there resides a great enemy, in the form of anger!

yaḥ krodha-mohau tyajati taṁ devā brāhmaṇaṁ viduḥ || 34 ||  
yo vaded iha satyāni gururṁ saṁtoṣayeta ca |  
himsitaśca ta himseta taṁ devā brāhmaṇaṁ viduḥ || 35 ||

The gods know him to be a Brahmin who has renounced both anger and delusion<sup>65</sup>. The gods know him to be a Brahmin who always speaks the truth, who always gratifies his preceptor, and who, though injured himself, never returns the injury.

<sup>64</sup> Rishi Agastya is said to have drunk the water of the oceans in order to reveal Asuras that were hiding there. Afterwards he pissed the water out and hence it is salty and brackish.

<sup>65</sup> *Moha* – delusion – is the identification with the body-mind complex (*ahankāra*) and the idea of possessiveness (*mamata*).

jitendriyo dharma-parah svādhyāya-nirataḥ śuciḥ |  
kāma-krodhau vaśau yasya taṁ devā brāhmaṇaṁ viduḥ || 36 ||

The gods know him to be a Brahmin who is perfectly self-controlled, who is devoted to Dharma and the study of the Vedas, who is pure and who has control over anger and self-referent desires.

yasya cātma-samo loko dharmajñasya manasvinaḥ |  
sarva dharmeṣu caratas taṁ devā brāhmaṇaṁ viduḥ || 37 ||

That person who is conversant with Dharma and intelligent, who treats all beings as equal to himself, who conforms to the principles of all Dharmas — him the gods know to be a Brahmin.

yo'dhyāpayedadhīyāta yajed vā yājyāta vā |  
dadyād vā'pi yathāśakti taṁ devā brāhmaṇaṁ viduḥ || 38 ||

The gods know him to be a Brahmin who is dedicated to study and teaches others, who performs sacrifices himself and officiates at the sacrifices of others, and who is generous in giving to others.

brāhmacārī vadānyo yo'dhīyāta dvija-puṅgavaḥ |  
svādhyāyavānamatto vai taṁ devā brāhmaṇaṁ viduḥ || 39 ||

The gods know him to be a Brahmin, who has taken the vow of studentship (brahmacārya) who is generous and is totally absorbed in *svādhyāya*.<sup>66</sup>

yad brāhmaṇānāṁ kuśalaṁ tad eśāṁ parikīrtayet |  
satyaṁ tathā vyāharatāṁ nāṁṛte ramate manaḥ || 40 ||

Whatever conduces to the welfare of the Brahmins should be told to them. Ever taking pleasure in truth, the minds of such men never find joy in untruth.

dharmaṁ tu brāhmaṇasyāhuḥ svādhyāyaṁ damam ārjavam |  
indriyāṇāṁ nigrahaṁ ca śāśvataṁ dvijasattama || 41 ||

O you best of Brahmins, the eternal duties of the Brahmins is the study of the Vedas, discipline, candidness, and consistent control of the senses.

satyārjave dharmam āhuḥ paraṁ dharma-vido janāḥ |  
durjñeyaḥ śāśvato dharmah sa ca satye pratiṣṭhitaḥ || 42 ||

Those cognisant with Dharma have said that truth and honesty are the highest forms of virtue. Dharma that is eternal is difficult of being understood. But whatever it is, it is based on *truth*.

śruti-pramāṇo dharmah syād iti vṛddhānuśāsanam |  
bahudhā dr̥śyate dharmah sūkṣma eva dvijottama || 43 ||

The ancients have declared that the Veda is the source of Dharma. But, Dharma as expounded in Veda appears to be of various kinds. It is, therefore, too subtle of comprehension.

bhavān api dharmajñah svādhyāya nirataḥ śuciḥ |  
na tu tattvena bhagavan dharmam vetsīti me matiḥ || 44 ||

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<sup>66</sup> *Sva-adhyaya* — is both the study of the Vedas as well as self-study and self-analysis leading to self-transformation. The housewife uses the term her in in secondary sense insinuating that he has not yet achieved any profound level of self-knowledge.

Even though you are O holy one, knowledgeable in Dharma, pure and devoted to the study of the *Vedas*. I think, however, that you do not know what the essence of Dharma really is.

yadi vipra na jānīṣe dharmam paramakam dvija |  
dharmavyādham tata prccha gatvā tu mithilām purīm || 45 ||

If indeed, you realise that you are not really acquainted with what constitutes the highest Dharma, go to the city of Mithila, and enquire of the virtuous butcher there.

mātā-pitr̥bhyām śuśrūpuḥ satyavādī jitendriyaḥ |  
mithilāyām vased vyādhaḥ sa te dharmān pravakṣyati || 46 ||

The butcher is truthful and devoted to the service of his parents and is completely self-controlled. Even he will discourse to you on Dharma.

tatra gacchasva bhadram te yathā kāmam dvijottama |  
vyādhaḥ parama-dharmātmā sa te cetsyati samśayam || 47 ||

Blessed be you, if you're interested then go there, that butcher who is an exemplar of Dharma will clarify all your doubts.

atyuktam api me sarvaṁ kṣantum arhasya nindita |  
striyo hyavadhyāḥ sarveśām ye dharmam abhivindate || 48 ||

O faultless one, you should forgive me for my unintended offence of saying what you may find unpalatable, for those who are serious in their practice of Dharma are incapable of punishing women!

brāhmaṇa uvāca

pṛito'smi tava bhadram te gataḥ krodhaśca śobhane |  
upāmbhastvayā prokto mama niśreyasaṁ param || 49 ||

The Brahmin replied:– I am pleased with you, may you be blessed; my anger has subsided! The reproofs uttered by you will be of the highest advantage to me.

svasti te'stu gamiṣyāmi sādhaiṣyāmi śobhane |  
dhanyā tvam asi kalyāṇi yasyāḥ syād vṛttam īdṛśam || 50 ||

May you be well! I shall now go and accomplish what is so conducive to my spiritual growth. I bless you who are so evidently grounded in spiritual practice!

mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

tayā viśṛṣṭo nirgatya svameva bhavanam yayau |  
vinindansa svamātmānam kauśiko dvijasattamaḥ ||

Markandeya continued, Having been dismissed by her, Kausika, departed and reproaching himself, returned to his own abode.



## DRAUPADI'S TIRADE AGAINST GOD.

Vana Parva 30, 31

The significance of this dialogue is the subject matter - questioning the value of Dharma and the rectitude of God. Here we have one of the central characters, if not *the* central character – a strong outspoken woman – Draupadi expressing her doubts and delivering a tirade against God. This tirade is unique in the religious literature of the world – there is no equivalent in the Bible or Koran. It also expresses a universal phenomenon amongst religious people – loss of faith in adversity.

draupadyuvāca

namo dhātre vidhātre ca yau moham cakratus tava |  
pitṛpaitāmahe rājye voḍhavye te'nyathā matiḥ || 1 ||

Draupadi said (to Yudhishtira), "I bow to Dhatā (Isvara) and Vidhata (destiny) who have thus clouded your reason! Regarding the burden [of exile you must bear] you think differently from the ways of your ancestors!

karmabhiścintito loko gatyāṁgatyāṁ pṛthag vidhaḥ |  
tasmāt karmāṇi nityāni lobhān mokṣaṁ yiyāsati || 2 ||  
neha dharmā nṛṣaṁsyābhyāṁ na kṣāntyā nārjavena ca |  
puruṣaḥ śriyam āpnoti na ghrṇitvena karhicit || 3 ||

Under the influenced by Karma people are born in various conditions. Karma, therefore, produces consequences that are inevitable; Liberation (*moksha*) is desired from greed only. It seems to me that one can never attain prosperity in this world through Dharma, gentleness, forgiveness, straight-forwardness and fear of censure!

tvām ced vyasanam abhyāgād idam bhārata duḥsaham |  
sa tvam nārhasi nāpīme bhrātaraste mahaujasah || 4 ||

If this were not so, O Yudhishtira, this insufferable calamity would never have overtaken you and also these heroic brothers of yours who are so undeserving of it!

na hi te'dhyagamañjātu tadānīm nādyā bhārata |  
dharmāt priyatarāṁ kiñcid api cejjīvitādapi || 5 ||

Neither in those days of prosperity nor in these days of adversity, has anything been as dear to you as Dharma, you even regard it as dearer to you than life itself.

dharmārtham eva te rājyaṁ dharmārthaṁ jīvitam ca te |  
brāhmaṇa guravaścaiva jānantyapi ca devatāḥ || 6 ||

All the Brahmins and your elders and even the celestials know that your kingdom is for Dharma alone and that even your life also is for Dharma alone.

bhīmasenārjunau cobhau mādreyau ca mayā saha |  
tyajestvamiti me buddhir na tu dharmam parityajeh || 7 ||

I think you would very easily abandon Bhimasena and Arjuna and these twin sons of Madri along with myself, rather than abandon your Dharma!

rājānam dharmā goptāraṁ dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ |  
iti me śrutam āryāṇāṁ tvām tu manye na rakṣati || 8 ||

I have heard it said that the monarch protects Dharma; and Dharma, protected by him, protects him [in return]! However, I don't see that Dharma protects you!

nāvamāṁsthā hi sadṛṣān nāvarāṁśreyasaḥ kutah |  
avāpya pṛthivīm kṛtsnām na te śṛṅgam avardhata || 9 ||

You have never disrespected your equals, inferiors or superiors. Upon obtaining even the entire empire, your pride never increased!

svāhākāraiḥ svadhābhiṣca pūjābhir api ca dvijān |  
devatāṣca pitṛm̐scaiva satataṁ pārtha sevase || 10 ||

You always worshipped Brahmins, gods and the Pitris, with proper mantras and all other requisite forms of worship!

brāhmaṇāḥ sarva kāmaiste satataṁ pārtha tarpitāḥ |  
yatayo mokṣiṇaṣcaiva gr̥hastāṣcaiva bhārata || 11 ||  
bhuñjate rukmapātrībhīryatrāhaṁ paricārikā |  
āraṇyakebhyo vanyāni bhojanāni prayacchasi |  
nādeyaṁ brāhmaṇebhyaste gr̥he kiñcana vidyate || 12 ||

You always gratified the Brahmins by fulfilling every wish of theirs! Yatis and Sannyasins (renunciates) and householder Brahmins have always been fed in your house off plates of gold, where I myself have served them food. To the Vānaprasthas (forest hermits) you always gave gold and food. There is nothing in your palace that you wouldn't give away to Brahmins!

yad idam vaiśvadevānte sāyaṁ prātaḥ pradīyate |  
tad dattvā'tithi bhṛtyebhyo rājañ śiṣṭeṇa jīvasi || 13 ||

In the daily Vishvadeva ceremony performed in your house for peace of mind, the food consecrated is first offered to guests and all creatures while you yourself ate whatever remained (after distribution)!

asminnapi mahāraṇye vijane dasyu sevite |  
rāṣṭrād apetya vasato dharmaste nāvasīdati || 14 ||

Even in this great forest, so solitary and haunted by robbers, living in exile, divested of your kingdom, your Dharma has sustained no diminution!

aśvamedho rājasūyaḥ pauṇḍarīko'tha gosavaḥ |  
iṣṭāstvayā mahāyajñābahavo'nye sadakṣiṇāḥ || 15 ||

The Asvamedha, Rajasuya, Pundarika, and Gosava — all these grand Vaidik sacrifices requiring huge expense and abundant gifts, have all been performed by you!

rājan parītayā buddhyā viśame'kṣa-parājaye |  
pārtha mitrāṇi cāsmāṁsca vasūni ca parājitaḥ || 16 ||

Impelled by some sense of perversity during that gambling match that you lost, you even staked and lost your kingdom, your wealth, your weapons, your brothers, and even myself!

r̥jor mṛdor badānyasya dhīmataḥ satya vādinaḥ |  
katham akṣa-vyasanajā buddhir āpatitā tava || 17 ||

You are so simple, gentle, liberal, modest and truthful, how could you be so addicted to the vice of gambling?

atīva moham āyāti manaś ca paribhūyate |  
niśāmya te duḥkham idam imām cāpadam īdṛśīm || 18 ||

I am almost going crazy, O king, and my heart is overwhelmed with grief, seeing you in this distressful calamity!

atrāpyudāharantīmam itihāsaṁ purātanam |  
īśvarasya vaśe lokas tiṣṭhate nātmano yathā || 19 ||

There is an ancient narrative which illustrates the truth that we are all subjects to the will of Íśvara alone and never to our own wishes!

dhātaiva khalu bhūtānāṁ sukha duḥkhe priyāpriye |  
dadāti sarvam īśānaḥ purastācchukram uccaran || 20 ||

The Supreme Lord predestines everything — the happiness and misery, the attractions and aversions of all creatures, they are all controlled by Karma, which is like a seed [destined to sprout into a tree under the right conditions].

yathā dārumayīm yośāṁ naro dhīraḥ samāhitaḥ |  
iṅgyatyaṅgamaṅgāni tathā rājannimāḥ prajāḥ || 21 ||

Just as a wooden puppet is manipulated by the puppeteer pulling the strings, so are all creatures made to act by the Supreme Lord!

śakunis tantu baddho vā nīyate'yaman īśvaraḥ |  
īśvarasya vaśe tiṣṭhan nānyeśāmātmanaḥ prabhuḥ || 22 ||

Like a bird tied with a string, every creature is dependent on Íśvara. Every one is totally subjected to Íśvara's will. No one has independant control over anything.

maṇiḥ sūtra iva proto nasyota iva go-vṛṣaḥ |  
srotaso madhyamāpannaḥ kūlavṛkṣa iva cyutaḥ || 23 ||  
dhātur ādeśam anveti tan mayo hi tad arpaṇaḥ |  
nātmādhīno manuśyo'yam kālāṁ bhajatīm kañcana || 24 ||

Like a pearl on its string, or a bull controlled by the cord through its nose, or a tree fallen from the bank into the middle of the stream, every creature follows the commands of the Creator, because He dwells within every being and is the Supreme Controller. And humans are totally dependent on the Lord of All, and can do nothing independently.

ajño jantur anīśo'yamātmanaḥ sukha duḥkhaḥ |  
īśvara prerito gacchet svargaṁ narakam eva ca || 25 ||

Enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, creatures are not authors of their own suffering and happiness. They go to heaven or hell decided by Íśvara Himself.

yathā vāyostrṇāgrāṇi vaśaṁ yānti balīyasaḥ |  
dhātur evaṁ vaśaṁ yānti sarva bhūtāni bhārata || 26 ||

Just as pieces of straw are powerless in the wind and are blown about, so are all beings under the complete control of Íśvara. There is no such thing as free will.

paśya māyā prabhāvo'yam īśvareṇa yathā kṛtaḥ |  
yo hanti bhūtair bhūtāni mohayitvā'tma māyayā || 27 ||

O Yudhishtira, see the mystery of the Self-created Almighty God! Spreading delusion, He has His own creatures killed by others!

anyathā paridṛṣṭāni munibhistattvadarśibhiḥ |  
anyathā parivartante vegā iva nabhasvataḥ || 28 ||

The insightful people see things differently, to the ignorant the same things also appear differently, just like a mirage in the desert.



anyathaiva hi vartante puruṣāstāni tāni ca |  
anyathaiva prabhustāni karoti vikaroti ca || 29 ||

People all see things through their own personal filters, in various ways, but ultimately it is God who makes them all, adopting different processes in their creation and destruction.

yathā kāṣṭhena vā kāṣṭham aśmānaṁ cāśmanā punaḥ |  
ayasā cāpyayaśchindyān nirviceṣṭam acetanam || 30 ||

Just as one may break a piece of inert and senseless wood with wood, or stone with stone, or iron with iron. And the Supreme Lord, according to his pleasure, plays with His creatures.

evam sa bhagavān devaḥ svayaṁbhūḥ prapitāmahaḥ |  
nihanti bhūtair bhūtāni chadma kṛtvā yudhiṣṭhira || 31 ||

In this way O Yudhisthira the Supreme Autocratic Grandfather of the universe kills some beings using other beings and thus deceives everyone!

saṁprajoyya viyojyāyaṁ kāma-kāra karaḥ prabhuḥ |  
krīḍate bhagavān bhūtair bālaḥ krīḍanakairiva || 32 ||

As a child plays with a toy, in the same way the capricious all-powerful God whimsically plays with his creation, combining and separating them as he pleases!

na māṭṛ pitṛvad rājan dhātā bhūteṣu vartate |  
roṣād iva pravṛtto'yaṁ yathā'yam itaro janaḥ || 33 ||

It doesn't seem to me that God behaves towards his creatures like a father or mother. But rather he behaves like a vicious person with a bad angry attitude!

āryāṇ śīlavato dṛṣṭvā hrīmato vṛtti karśitān |  
anāryān sukhinaścaiva vihvalām iva cintayā || 34 ||

While seeing that noble, well-behaved and modest people are persecuted, while the criminals are happy, I am deeply troubled.

tavemām āpadam dṛṣṭvā samṛddhim ca suyodhane |  
dhātāram garhaye pārtha viśamam yo'nupaśyati || 35 ||

Seeing you in such great distress and the prosperity of Duryodhana ever expanding, I am contemptuous of the Great Ordainer who allows such inequality!

ārya śāstrātige krūre lubdhe dharmāpacāyini |  
dhārtarāṣṭre śriyam dattvā dhātā kim phalam aśnute || 36 ||

What benefit does the great God gain by granting prosperity to Dhritarashtra's son who transgress every law, who is crooked and covetous, and who vandalises Dharma!

karma cet kṛtam-anveti kartāram nānyamṛcchati |  
karmaṇā tena pāpena lipyate nūnam īśvaraḥ || 37 ||

If the Karma done pursues the doer and none other, then certainly it is God himself who is contaminated with every sinful act.

atha karma-kṛtam pāpam na cet kartāram ṛcchati |  
kāraṇam balam eveha janāṇ śocāmi durbalān || 38 ||

If however, the doer is not responsible for the consequences of an act done, then (individual) might (and not God) is the true cause of acts, and I grieve deeply for those that are weak!"

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

valgu citra-padaṁ ślakṣṇaṁ yājñaseni tvayā vacaḥ |  
uktaṁ tacchrutam asmābhir nāstikyam tu prabhāśase || 39 ||

Yudhishtira said:— "O Yajnaseni, your speech is delightful, mellifluous and full of excellent usages. We have listened to it (carefully). You speak, like a repudiator of the Vedas (*nāstika*).

nāhaṁ dharma phalākāṅkṣī rāja-putri carāmbhuta |  
dadāmi deyam ityeva yaje yaṣṭavyam ityuta || 40 ||

O princess, I never act out of a desire for the fruits of my actions. I give away, because it is my duty to give; I sacrifice because it is my duty to sacrifice!

astu vā'tra phalaṁ mā vā kartavyam puruṣeṇa yat |  
grhe nivasatā kṛṣṇe yathāśakti karomi tat || 41 ||

I strive to the best of my power to fulfil the duties of a householder, regardless of whether those duties have benefits or not.

dharmam carāmi suśroṇi na dharma-phala-kāraṇāt |  
āgamānanatikramya satām vṛttam avekṣya ca || 42 ||

I act virtuously, not from the desire of reaping any benefit from Dharma, but of not transgressing the teachings of the Veda, and observing also the conduct of the good and wise [I take their example]!

dharma eva manaḥ kṛṣṇe svabhāvāccaiva me dhṛtam |  
dharma-vāṇijyako hīno jaghanyo dharma-vādinām || 43 ||

My mind is naturally inclined towards Dharma. The one who practices Dharma in order to reap benefits is a trader in Dharma and reprehensible! Such a person should never be counted amongst the virtuous.

na dharma phalam āpnoti yo dharmam dogdhum icchati |  
yaścainaṁ śaṅkate kṛtvā nāstikyāt pāpa-cetanaḥ || 44 ||

One who milks Dharma for gain will never obtain the fruits thereof! The one who doubts Dharma is of an irreverent disposition and will never succeed either.

ativādān madāccaiva mā dharmam abhiśaṅkathāḥ |  
dharmātiśaṅkī puruṣas tiryag gati parāyaṇaḥ || 45 ||  
dharmo yasyātiśaṅkyah syād ārśam vā durbalātmanaḥ |  
vedācchūdra ivāpeyātsa lokād ajarāmarāt || 46 ||

I speak to you of the Vedas which constitute the highest authority in such matters, that you should never doubt the efficacy of Dharma! One who doubts Dharma is destined to take rebirth in the brute species. One of limited understanding who doubts Dharma or the teaching of the Rishis, is precluded from regions of immortality and bliss, like commoners from the study of the Vedas!

vyāso vasiṣṭho maitreya nārado lomaśaḥ śukaḥ |  
anye ca ṛṣayaḥ sarve dharmenaiva sucetasaḥ || 46 ||

Vyasa, and Vasistha and Maitreya, and Narada and Lomasa, and Suka, and other Rishis have all, by Dharma alone, become exalted!

ete hi dharmam evādau varṇayanti sadā'nadhe |  
kartavyam amara prakhyāḥ pratyakṣāgama buddhayaḥ || 48 ||

O sinless one, these all are equal to the celestials themselves, they directly perceive what is revealed in the Vedas, and describe Dharma as the foremost duty of humankind!

ato nārhasi kalyāṇi dhātāraṁ dharmam eva ca |  
rajomūḍhena manasā kṣeptuṁ śaṅkitum eva ca || 49 ||

You shouldn't therefore, O amiable Queen, either doubt Dharma or censure God out of misguided foolishness.

unmattān manyate bālaḥ sarvān āgata niścayān |  
dharmātiśaṅkī nānyasmin pramāṇam adhigacchati || 50 ||

The fool that disregards Dharma, proud of the justification derived from personal reasoning, accepts no objective evidence and thinks of the Rishis, who are capable of knowing the future as idiots.

indriya prīti sambaddhaṁ yad idaṁ loka sākṣikam |  
etāvan manyate bālo moham anyatra gacchati || 51 ||

The fool has regard only for the external world capable of gratifying the senses, and is blind to everything else.

pramāṇāddhi nivṛtto hi veda śāstrārtha nindakaḥ |  
kāmalobhānugo mūḍho narakam pratipadyate || 52 ||

A person who rejects objective evidence, and who slanders the [valid] interpretation of the Vedic scriptures, a selfish fool motivated by selfishness and greed will surely go the hellish realms.

ārśam pramāṇam utkrāmya dharmam na pratipālayan |  
sarva śāstrātigo mūḍhaḥ śam janmasu na vindati || 53 ||

One who disrespects the teachings of the Rishis, and refuses to practice Dharma, and acts contrary to all the Shastras, never experiences happiness in any future births.

purāṇam ṛṣibhiḥ proktaṁ sarvajñaiḥ sarva darśibhiḥ |  
dharma eva plavo nānyaḥ svargaṁ draupadi gacchatām |  
saivaḥ nauḥ sāgarasyeva vaṇijaḥ pāram icchataḥ || 54 ||

Doubt not, O Draupadi, the ancient religion that is practiced by the good and enlightened Rishis of universal knowledge and capable of seeing all things! Dharma is the only raft for those desirous of going to heaven, like a ship to merchants desirous of crossing the ocean.

aphalo yadi dharmah syāccarito dharmacāribhiḥ |  
apraṭiṣṭhe tamasyetaḥ jagatmajjeda nindite || 55 ||

If the Dharmas that are practiced by the virtuous were of no value, this universe would be enveloped in deep darkness of chaos.

nirvāṇam nādhigaccheyurjīveyuḥ paśu-jīvikām |  
vighātenaiva yujyeyurna cārtham kañcid āpnuyuḥ || 56 ||

If Dharma is indeed purposeless then no one would bother to seek Nirvana, no one would strive to acquire knowledge, not even wealth or beneficial projects, people would live like beasts.

tapaśca brahmacaryam ca yajñah svādhyāya eva ca |  
dānam ārjavam etāni yadi syur aphaḷāni vai |  
nācariśyanpare dharmam pare paratare'pi ca || 57 ||

If meditation, sexual restraint, yajña, study of the Vedas, charity, honesty etc. — were all unproductive and worthless, people would not have practiced Dharma generation after generation.

phala-daṁ tviha vijñāya dhātāraṁ śreyasi sthitam |  
dharmaṁ te'vyacaran kṛṣṇe sa hi dharma sanātanaḥ || 58 ||

Being convinced that God is the just bestower of fruits in respect of Dharma, previous generations practiced Dharma in this world.

sa nāyaṁ aphalo dharmo na adharmo'phalavān api |  
dṛṣyante'pi hi vidyānām phalāni tapasām tathā || 59 ||

Dharma practice is never worthless and the results of Adharma can never be avoided. The outcomes of both knowledge and spiritual practice are readily seen.

karmaṇām śruta puṇyānām pāpānām ca phalodayaḥ |  
prabhavaścāpyayaścaiva deva guhyāni bhāmini || 60 ||

The results of meritorious acts enjoined by the Vedas and the results of transgressions, their origin, development and destruction are mysterious even to the gods.

na phalā darsanād dharmāḥ śaṅkitavyo na devatāḥ |  
yaṣṭavyaṁ ca prayatnena dātavyaṁ cānasūyatā || 61 ||

Therefore, though you may not directly and immediately witness the outcome of Dharma, you should have no misgivings regarding Dharma or the gods. You should make offerings enthusiastically, and practice generosity without jealousy.

karmaṇām phalam astīha tathaitad dharma śāsanam |  
tasmāt te saṁśayaḥ kṛṣṇe nīhāra iva naśyatu |  
vimṛśya sarvam astīti nāstikyaṁ bhāvam utsṛja || 62 ||

The outcomes of Karma are certain, this is the teaching of the Dharma. Let your doubt, therefore, O Draupadi be dispelled like mist. Reflecting upon all this, let go of your skepticism.

īśvaraṁ cāpi bhūtānām dhātāraṁ mā ca vai kṣipa |  
śikṣasvainaṁ namasvainaṁ mā te'bhūd buddhir īdṛṣī || 63 ||

Don't disparage Íśvara who is the lord who nourishes all beings. Learn how to know Him. Bow down unto him. Don't be such a cynic!

yasya prasādāt tad bhakto martyo gacchaty amartyatām |  
uttamām devatām kṛṣṇe mātivocaḥ kathañcana || 64 ||

And, O Draupadi, never disregard that Supreme Being through whose grace mortals, by their devotion, acquire immortality!"



# DHṚTARĀṢṬRA SANAT-SUJĀTA SAMVĀDA

Udyoga Parva 43 - 44

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca.

na ced vedā veda-vidaṁ trātuṁ śaktā vicakṣaṇa |  
atha kasmāt pralāpo'yaṁ brāhmaṇānāṁ sanātanaḥ || 1 ||

Dhritarashtra said:— "O wise sage, if the Vedas cannot rescue a person [without the aid of Dharma], whence then is this long time delusion of the Brahmanas that the Vedas can save them?

sanatsujāta uvāca.

tasyaiva nāmādi viśeṣa rūpair idaṁ jagad bhāti mahānubhāva |  
nirdiśya samyak pravadanti vedās tad viśva-vairūpyam udāharanti || 2 ||

Sanat-sujata said:— "O magnanimous one, this universe has sprung from that Supreme Being by the combination of name, form, and other factors. The Vedas are duly indicating this fact and inculcate that the Supreme Being is beyond all qualities.

tadārtha yuktaṁ tapa etad ijjā tābhyām asau puṇyam upaiti vidvān |  
puṇyena pāpaṁ vinihatya paścāt saṁjāyate jñāna vidīpitātmā || 3 ||

It is for attaining that Supreme Being that *tapas* and *yajñas* are ordained [by the Vedas], and it is by these two that the learned earn merit. Through merit is demerit destroyed and thereafter one attains wisdom.

jñānena cātmānam upaiti vidvān athān yathā varga phalānukāṅkṣī |  
asmin kṛtaṁ tat pariṅghya sarvaṁ amutra bhuṅkte punareti mārgam || 4 ||

The wise person, through cultivating insight, attains Self-realization. Otherwise, one that is dedicated to the pursuit of the four objects of human life, reaps their rewards in the hereafter, and (since those rewards) are limited, returns to this world when the merits are exhausted.

asminloke tapas taptaṁ phalam anyatra bhujyate |  
brāhmaṇānām ime lokā ṛddhe tapasi tiṣṭhatām || 5 ||

Indeed, the fruits of spiritual practices undergone in this world with a self-serving motivation (*sakāma*) will be enjoyed in the other world [as regards those persons who have not obtained self-realization]. As regards those employed in spiritual practices [who have attained self-realization], their benefits are obtained here in this world and they attain liberation hereafter.

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca.

kathaṁ samṛddhamapyṛddhaṁ tapo bhavati kevalam |  
sanatsujāta tad brūhi yathā vidyāma tad vayam || 6 ||

Dhritarashtra said:— "O Sanat-sujata, how can spiritual practices which are all of the same kind, be sometimes successful and sometimes unsuccessful? Explain this to us in order that we may know it!"

sanatsujāta uvāca

niṣkalmaṣaṁ tapas tve tat kevalaṁ paricakṣate |  
etat samṛddhamapyṛddhaṁ tapo bhavati kevalam || 7 ||

Sanat-sujata said:– "That spiritual practice which is not tainted [by desire and attachment] is said to be capable of leading to liberation, and is, therefore successful, while the spiritual practice that is tainted by vanity and desire [for results] is regarded as unsuccessful.

tapo mūlam idaṁ sarvaṁ yaṁ mām prcchasi kṣatriya |  
tapasā veda vidvāṁsaḥ paraṁ tvamṛtam āpnuyuḥ || 8 ||

All your enquiries, O Kshatriya, touch at the very root of spiritual practice. It is by spiritual practice [unmotivated by desire] that the learned, realise *Brahman* and achieve immortality!"

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

kalmaṣaṁ tapaso brūhi śrutaṁ niṣkalmaṣaṁ tapaḥ |  
sanatsujāta yenedaṁ vidyāṁ guhyaṁ sanātanam || 9 ||

Dhritarashtra said:– "I have listened to what you have said about spiritual practice untainted by faults, now please tell me about spiritual practice that is tainted so that I may know this great mystery."

sanatsujāta uvāca.

krodhādāyo dvādaśa yasya doṣās tathā nṛśaṁsāni daśa tri rājan |  
dharmādāyo dvādaśaite piṭṛṇāṁ śāstre guṇā ye veditā dvijānām || 10 ||

Sanat-sujata said:– "O king, the twelve faults; anger etc. as also the thirteen kinds of wickedness, are the problems associated with tainted spiritual practice. The Dharma Shastras all proclaim that the perfection of these is the Dharma of the initiated.

krodhaḥ kāmo lobha-mohau vidhitsā kṛpāsūye māna-śokau spṛhā ca |  
īrṣyā jugupsā ca manuṣya-doṣa varjyāḥ sadā dvādaśaite narāṇām || 11 ||

Anger, self-referent desire, avarice, delusion, discontent, cruelty, malicious envy, vanity, grief, love of pleasure, jealousy, and speaking ill of others, are generally the faults of all humans. These twelve faults should always be avoided by spiritual practitioners.

ekaikam ete rājendra manuṣyān paryupāsate |  
lipsamānontaraṁ teṣāṁ mṛgāṇāmiva lubdhakaḥ || 12 ||

Any one amongst these can singly effect one's destruction. Indeed, every one of these await patiently for an opportunity to attack, like a hunter waiting for an opening to shoot a deer.

vikatthanāḥ spṛhayālur manasvī bibhrat kopam capalo rakṣaṇaśca |  
etān pāpāḥ ṣaṇṇarāḥ pāpa dharmān prakurvate no trasantaḥ sudurge || 13 ||

Assertion of one's own superiority, greed, inability to tolerate the slightest disrespect, bad-temper, fickleness, and neglect of caring for dependants — these six acts of wickedness are characteristic of inveterate sinners who defy all the drastic consequences resulting from their faults.

saṁbhoga saṁvidviṣamo'timānī dattānutāpī kṛpaṇo balīyān |  
varga praśaṁsī vanitāsu dveṣṭā ete pare sapta nṛśaṁsa vargāḥ || 14 ||

One that is addicted to the gratification of lust, one that is inconstant and fickle, one that is exceedingly arrogant, one that gives and then regrets, one that is stingy, one who praises only *artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (pleasure), and a misogynist — these seven also fall into the category of the wicked.



dharmas̥ca satyaṁ ca damas tapaśca āmātsaryaṁ hr̥is̥ titikṣānasūyā |  
yajñas̥ca dānaṁ ca dhṛtiḥ śrutam̐ ca vratāni vai dvādaśa brāhmaṇasya || 15 ||

Dharma, truth, self-restraint, spiritual discipline, delight in the happiness of others, modesty, forbearance, not criticising others, yajñas, generosity, perseverance, study of the scriptures — these twelve constitute Brahminical commitments.

yastvetebhyaḥ prabhaved dvādaśabhyaḥ sarvām apīmāṁ pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt |  
tribhir dvābhyām ekato vārthito yas tasya svamastīti sa veditavyaḥ || 16 ||

One that succeeds in acquiring adeptness in these twelve, becomes competent to sway the entire world. One that is endowed with three, two, or even one of these qualities, should be regarded as possessed of the greatest wealth.

damas-tyāgo'pramādaśca eteṣv-amṛtam-āhitam |  
tāni satyamukhāny-āhur brāhmaṇā ye manīṣiṇaḥ || 17 ||

Discipline, non-attachment and mindfulness — immortality rests on these three. The wise spiritual practitioners say that these are the attributes in which truth predominates.

damo'ṣṭādaśa doṣaḥ syāt prāti kūlyaṁ kṛte bhavet |  
anṛtam cābhyasūyā ca kāmārthau ca tathā sprhā || 18 ||  
krodhaḥ śokas tathā tṛṣṇā lobhaḥ paiśūnyam eva ca |  
matsaraśca vihiṁsā ca paritāpas tathā'ratiḥ || 19 ||  
apasmāraścātivādastathā saṁbhāvanātmani |  
etair vimukto doṣairyaḥ sa dāntaḥ sadbhir ucyate || 20 ||

Self-discipline is constituted by overcoming the eighteen deficiencies:— Breaches and non-observance of ordained acts and omissions, falsehood, seeing faults in virtues, lust for women, obsessed with the accumulation of wealth, love of (sensual) pleasure, anger, grief, craving [for stuff], avarice, regularly engaging in gossip, envy, injuring others, regret, aversion to guidance, forgetfulness of duty, calumniating others, and self-aggrandizement — one that is freed from these (eighteen) vices; is said by the righteous and *self-controlled*.

mado'ṣṭādaś-adoṣaḥ syāt tyāgo bhavati ṣaḍ vidhaḥ |  
viparyayāḥ smṛtā ete mada doṣā udāhṛtāḥ |  
doṣā damasya ye proktās tān doṣānparivarjayet || 21 ||

The eighteen deficiencies [that have been enumerated] constitute what is called *mada* or 'hubris'. Renunciation is of six kinds. The reverse of these six again are also called *mada*.<sup>67</sup>

śreyāṁs tu ṣaḍ vidhas tyāgaḥ śriyaṁ prāpya na hr̥ṣyati |  
iṣṭā-pūrte dvitīyaṁ syān nitya vairāgya yogataḥ ||  
kāma tyāgaśca rājendra sa tṛtīya iti smṛtaḥ || 22 ||

The six kinds of renunciation are all commendable. They are these:— The first is never giving expression to elation on obtaining prosperity. The second is the abandonment of investment in yajñas, prayers, and pious acts [for the sake of name and fame]. The third is consistent dispassion and relinquishment of motivation.

apyavācyaṁ vadantyetaṁ sa tṛtīyo guṇaḥ smṛtaḥ |  
tyaktair dravyair yad bhavati nopayuktaśca kāmataḥ || 23 ||  
na ca dravyais tad bhavati nopayuktaśca kāmataḥ |

<sup>67</sup> The faults, therefore, that go by the name of *mada* are eighteen plus six

na ca karma svasiddheṣu duḥkhaṁ te na ca na glapet |  
sarvair eva guṇair yukto dravyavānapi yo bhavet || 24 ||

Indeed, it is in consequence of this third kind of renunciation of desire, which is evidenced by the abandonment of all objects of enjoyment *per se*, and not their abandonment after having enjoyed them to the fill, nor by abandonment after acquisition, nor by abandonment only after one has become incompetent to enjoy from loss of appetite.

apriye ca samutpanne vyathāṁ jātu na gacchati |  
iṣṭān putrāṁśca dārāṁśca na yāceta kadācana || 25 ||

The fourth kind of renunciation is:— One should not grieve nor become depressed when experiencing disagreeable states. The fifth kind consists in not soliciting anything from even one's sons, wives and others that may all be very dear.

arhate yācamānāya pradeyaṁ tacchubhaṁ bhavet |  
apramādi bhaved etaiḥ sa cāpyaṣṭaguṇo bhavet || 26 ||

satyaṁ dhyānaṁ samādhānaṁ codyaṁ vairāgyaṁ eva ca |  
asteyaṁ brahmacaryaṁ ca tathā' saṅgrahaṁ eva ca || 27 ||

The sixth kind consists in giving away something to a deserving person who solicits. These [types of renunciation] are greatly beneficial. By these again, one becomes fully mindful. Mindfulness (*apramāda*) involves eight virtues.

These are:— truth, meditation, mental absorption, capacity for drawing inferences, withdrawal from the world, never taking what belongs to others, the practices of *Brahmacharya* vows (abstinence), and non-acceptance (of gifts).

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

sanatsujāta yāṁ imāṁ parāṁ tvaṁ brāhmīm vācaṁ vadase viśva-rūpāṁ |  
parāṁ hi kāmēna sudurlabhāṁ kathāṁ prabrūhi me vākyam idaṁ kumāra || 28 ||

Dhritarashtra said:— "O Sanat-sujata, you have discoursed upon the knowledge relating to the absolute and all-pervading Brahman (*viśva-rupam*). For one who is mired in worldly matter, the attainment of that is extremely hard. I request you to speak more on this subject."

sanatsujāta uvāca

naitad brahma tvaramāṇena labhyaṁ yan māṁ pricchannatirṣyasyatīva |  
buddhau vilīne manasi pracintya vidyā hi sā brahmacaryeṇa labhyā || 29 ||

Sanat-sujata said:— "That *Brahman-realization* about which you asked me with such enthusiasm is certainly not easily attainable. After [sense-control has been achieved] the mind is absorbed into the intellect, then wisdom dawns [leading to the attainment of *Brahman*] — that wisdom is attainable only by practicing *Brahmacharya*."

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

atyanta vidyāṁ iti yat sanātānīm bravīṣi tvaṁ brahmacaryeṇa siddhāṁ |  
anārabhyaṁ vasatīha kāryakāle kathāṁ brāhmaṇyaṁ amṛtatvaṁ labheta || 30 ||

Dhritarashtra said:— "You say that the knowledge of *Brahman* is inherent in the mind, being only *discovered* by *Brahmacharya*; being already present in the mind, it requires no effort (such as are necessary for work) in order to manifest (itself). How can the immortality associated with *Brahman* be attained?"

sanatsujāta uvāca

avyakta vidyām abhidhāsyē parāṇīm buddhyā ca teṣāṁ brahmacaryeṇa siddhām |  
yām prāpyainam martya-lokaṁ tyajanti yā vai vidyā guru-vṛddheṣu nityā || 31 ||

Sanat-sujata said:— "Though residing in and inherent to the mind, the knowledge of *Brahman* is still *latent*. It is by the aid of the intellect and *Brahmacharya* that, that knowledge is revealed. Indeed, having attained that knowledge, *Yogins* forsake this world. This knowledge is always to be found among eminent preceptors. I shall now discourse to you on that knowledge."

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

brahmacaryeṇa yā vidyā śakyā veditum añjasā |  
tat katham brahmacaryam syād etad brahman bravīhi me || 32 ||

Dhritarashtra said:— "What is the nature of that *Brahmacharya* by which the knowledge of *Brahman* might be attained without much difficulty? O Brahmin, tell me this."

sanatsujāta uvāca

ācārya yonim iha ye praviśya bhūtvā garbhe brahmacaryam caranti |  
ihaiva te śāstra-kārā bhavanti prahāya deham paramam yānti yogam || 33 ||

Sanat-sujata said:— "They, who, residing in the ashrams of their gurus and winning their good-will and friendship, practice the disciplines of *Brahmacharya*, become even in this world the embodiments of the teachings, and casting off their bodies are merged in *Brahman*.

asminloke vai jayantīha kāmān brāhmīm sthitim hyanutitikṣa māṇāḥ |  
ta ātmānam nirharantīha dehān muñjād iṣṭkām iva satva samsthāḥ || 34 ||

They that in this world are desirous of obtaining the state of *Brahman*, transcend all binary oppositions, and endued as they are with *sattva*, they succeed in discriminating between the Self and the physical body like a blade of grass from its sheath.

śarīram etau kurutaḥ pitā mātā ca bhārata |  
ācāryaśāstā yā jātiḥ sā puṇyā sājarāmara || 35 ||

The body, O Bharata, is created by the father and the mother, the second birth, however, is due to the preceptor's instructions and is sacred, free from decrepitude, and immortal.

yaḥ prāvṛṇotyavitathena varṇānṛtaṁ kurvann amṛtaṁ saṁprayacchan |  
taṁ manyeta pitaram mātaram ca tasmai na druhyet katamasya jānan || 36 ||

The guru who wraps every one with (the mantle of) truth, discoursing upon *Brahman* and facilitating the attainment of immortality, should be regarded as both father and mother; and bearing in mind the good that he does, he should never be disregarded in any way.

guruṁ śiṣyo nityam abhivādayīta svādhyāyam icchecchuchir apramattaḥ |  
mānam na kuryān nādadhīta roṣam eṣa prathamam brahmacaryasya pādaḥ || 37 ||

A disciple should habitually salute the preceptor with respect, and maintaining purity of body and mind and remaining focused and mindful, he should apply himself to study, and not give the slightest place for anger to develop — this is the first stage of *brahmacharya*.

śiṣya vṛtti krameṇaiva vidyām āpnoti yaḥ śuciḥ |  
brahmacarya vratasyāṣya prathamam pāda ucyate || 38 ||

The student should follow his vocation and remaining pure, gradually and steadily acquire knowledge — this is also part of the first stage of *brahmacharya*.

ācāryasya priyaṁ kuryāt prāṇair api dhanair api |  
karmaṇa manasā vācā dvitīyaḥ pāda ucyate || 39 ||

A disciple should, with his very life and all his possessions, in thought, word and deed, do all that is agreeable to the preceptor. This is regarded as the second step of *brahmacharya*.

samā gurau yathā vṛttir-guru-patnyām tathā caret |  
tat putre ca tathā kurvan dvitīyaḥ pāda ucyate || 40 ||

The student should behave towards his preceptor's wife and children also in the same way as towards the preceptor himself. This also is regarded as the second step of *brahmacharya*.

ācāryeṇātma kṛtaṁ vijānan jñātvā cārthaṁ bhāvito'smītyanena |  
yan manyate taṁ prati hr̥ṣṭa buddhiḥ sa vai tṛtīyo brahmacaryasya pādaḥ || 41 ||

Bearing well in mind what has been done for him by the preceptor, and understanding also its purpose, the disciple should, with a delighted heart think — *I have been taught and made great by him*. This is the third step of *brahmacharya*.

nācāryasyānapākṛtya pravāsaṁ prājñāḥ kurvīta naitad ahaṁ karomi |  
itīva manyeta na bhāṣayeta sa vai caturtho brahmacaryasya pādaḥ || 42 ||

Without gratifying the preceptor by payment of the final gift, a wise disciple must not betake to another mode of life; nor should he ever say or even think of in his mind — *I have done the guru a favour*. This is the fourth step of *brahmacharya*.

kālena pādaṁ labhate tathārthaṁ tataśca pādaṁ guru yogataśca |  
utsāha yogena ca pādaṁ ṛccheccāstreṇa pādaṁ ca tato'bhiyāti || 43 ||

One quarter (of the knowledge of *Brahman* which is the object of *brahmacharya*) is acquired in the course of time, one quarter through the preceptor's teachings; one quarter by the power of one's own intellect; and one quarter by discussion on the Shastras with other students.

dharmādayo dvādaśa yasya rūpam anyāni cāṅgāni tathā balaṁ ca |  
ācārya-yoge phalatīti cāhur brahmārtha yogena ca brahmacaryam || 44 ||

The learned have said that *Brahmacharya* is constituted by the twelve afore mentioned virtues, the *Yoga*-practices are called its *limbs*, and perseverance in *Yoga*-meditation called is its *strength* and one is crowned with success in this through *guru-yoga* worship of the guru).

Stage	Goal
1	purity of body and mind, gradual and steady study
2	serve the teacher, his wife and children in every possible way
3	appreciating the magnanimity of the guru
4	payment of dakshina without self-congratulation

apāraṇīyaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt tad antako'pyeti vināśakāle |  
aṇīyo rūpaṁ kṣura-dhārayā samaṁ mahacca rūpaṁ tad vai parvatebhyaḥ || 45 ||

The ultimate nature of Brahman is incapable of being delimited and is beyond the reach of the conditioned intellect, even the universal Destroyer, after Cosmic Dissolution, is

himself absorbed into it. It is more subtle than the atom, fine as the edge of the razor, and even more colossal than the mountains.

sā pratiṣṭhā tad amṛtaṁ lokāś tad brahma tad yaśaḥ |  
bhūtāni jajhīre tasmāt pralayaṁ yānti tatra hi || 46 ||

It is the "Ground of all being," it is unchangeable; it is this visible universe (omnipresent); it is immense; it is delightful; all beings arise from it and merge back into it.

anāmayam tan mahad udyatam yaśo vāco vikāram kavayo vadanti |  
yasmiṁ jagat sarvaṁ idaṁ pratiṣṭhitam ye tad vidur amṛtāste bhavanti || 47 ||

Free from all kinds of binary oppositions, it is manifest as the universe and is all-pervading. The wise say that it is without any change, except in the language used to describe it. They are liberated that have realised *That* in which this universe is established.

